THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

WITH

HIS LIFE,

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

> "High Chief of Scottish song!
> That could'st alternately impart
> Wisdom and rapture in thy page,
> And brand each vice with satire strong;
> Whose lines are mottoes of the heart,
> Whose truths electrify the sage."
>
> CAMPBELL.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

CONTENTS.

NOTICE.

To arrange the Poems according to the order in which they were composed, and supply the places and names hitherto left blank, was the aim of the Editor. In this he has been assisted by some of the early friends of Burns, and aided by a copy of his Poems, in which, for the information of Dr. Geddes, he had filled up all deficiencies with his own hand. Though correct, perhaps, in general, he fears that he may have erred in particular instances. "The Kirk's Alarm," he was told, was partly, if not wholly, written during the Old and New Light discussions: but that, to suit the controversy in which Dr. M'Gill was engaged, the Poet modified and augmented it. The Editor has ventured to print one copy of the poem along with the controversial satires of the year 1785, reserving a later version—differing from the other both in manner and matter—to accompany the Poems of the year 1789. He has availed himself of variations in the Poet's manuscripts—particularly in poems printed after his death. He has followed, in general, the text of the first Edinburgh edition, and added such notes, biographical, historical, or critical, as he thought would be acceptable to the reader.

February, 1834.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST OR KILMARNOCK EDITION,

(July 1786.)

The following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these, and other celebrated names, their countrymen are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship awakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing: and none of

the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigue of a laborious life ; to transcribe the various feelings—the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears—in his own breast ; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poety to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world ; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, de-

clares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces, but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

PREFACE

SECOND OR EDINBURGH EDITION.

DEDICATION

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen:

A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service, where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the PLOUGH, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my

native tongue; I tuned my wild, artless notes as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours: that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated, and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great fountain of honour, the Monarch of the universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may social

Joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats; and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the ruler, and licentiousness in the people, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,

With the sincerest gratitude and highest respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most devoted humble Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH,
APRIL 4, 1787.



POEMS.

WINTER,

THE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"*
The joyless winter day
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it sooths my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

* Dr. Young

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

With the exception of one or two songs, this Dirge is the earliest of all the Poet's compositions: Gilbert Burns calls it a juvenile production, but assigns no date; it was written before the death of his father. That Burns thought well of it himself we have his own testimony. In his memoranda of April 1784, he says, "There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me—something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed 'Winter, a Dirge.'" Sorrow gave a melancholy colouring to the Poet's thoughts early in life, and induced him to love the sublimity of the tempestuous sky, and the grandeur of the shaken woods.

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc* he cam doytin by.
Wi' glowring e'en an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stands;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it!
He gaped wide but naething spak—
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whose lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my master dear.

* A neibor herd-callan.

" Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

" Tell him he was a master kin'
An' ay was gude to me and mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

" O, bid him save their harmless lives
Frae dogs, and tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel;
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, an' ripps o'corn.

" An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets!
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care ;
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!

An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame ;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

"An' niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop,
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel.

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

"Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale ;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blether."
This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
And clos'd her een amang the dead.

The field and the ditch where Mailie met with her mishap are still, I am informed, pointed out on the farm of Lochlea. "The circumstances of the poor sheep," says Gilbert, "were pretty much as Robert has described them. He had partly, by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers, to drive for us at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Hughoc's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and Dying Words,' pretty much in the way they now stand." There is something characteristic in the request which Mailie makes, that her son and heir may be brought up in a modest and decent way, and taught to be content with the pleasures of his own fields:—

> "An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
> Like other menseless, graceless brutes."

Nor is she unmindful of the education of her "Yowie silly thing:" she warns her against the inroads of moorland tups, and exclaims with her last breath,—

> "But ay keep mind to moop an' mell
> Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!"

Burns loved pastoral similitudes: in his lampoons on the western clergy he scattered them profusely. In the "Ordination" he enjoins the new pastor to look to the purity of his flock, and be stern about crosses in breeds, and all such matters as injure the flesh and the fleece. In the "Holy Tulzie," too, we find similar allusions—a sort of parody on the figurative sermons of the children of the "Old Light."

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe,
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie's dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—a rape!
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonnie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon!
His Mailie's dead.

"Poor Mailie's Elegy" is a later production somewhat than "The Death and Dying Words." It is freer in language and bolder in expression, and more like the vigorous offspring of Mossgiel than the progeny of Lochlea. He already looked upon himself as a poet: the last copestone is laid, he says, on his woes: he has not spirit to move out of the house, and calls on his tuneful brethren who dwell on the Doon and the Ayr, to—

"Join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed."

His earliest compositions appear to have been frequently revised and corrected—and his alterations are all for the better. "The stanza," says Gilbert,

'She was nae get o' moorland tips,'

was, at first, as follows—

'She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo' like goats, an' legs like trams,
She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs,
A famous breed;
Now Robin, greetin', chews the hams
O' Mailie dead.'

The taste of Burns rejected the verse, because the concluding lines jarred with the ruling sentiment of the poem.

FIRST

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

[David Sillar, Schoolmaster and Bard.]

—*January*, 1784.

I.

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
  And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
  In hamely westlin jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
  Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great folks' gift,
  That live sae bien an' snug:
    I tent less, and want less
      Their roomy fire-side;
    But hanker and canker
      To see their cursed pride.

II.

It's hardly in a body's power
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't;
But Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, no fear na,"*
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

III.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile:

* Ramsay.

And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'.

IV.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae done.

V.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in makin muckle mair;
It's no in books; it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest;

If happiness hae not her seat
  And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
  But never can be blest:
    Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
      Could make us happy lang;
    The heart ay's the part ay
      That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
  Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
  As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft, in haughty mood
  God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
  They riot in excess!
    Baith careless and fearless
      Of either heaven or hell!
    Esteeming and deeming
      Its a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,

By pining at our state ;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth ;
They let us ken oursel ;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts !
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest),
This life has joys for you and I ;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy :
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien' ;
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean !
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name :
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame !

IX.

O, all ye pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

X.

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.

It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

XI.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin, rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
'Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
An' rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

The hero of this Epistle is the well-known David Sillar, a scholar and a poet, and lately one of the magistrates of Irvine. He published a little volume of verses, some of which displayed considerable talent; his stories in rhyme are easy and humorous. At the time that he became intimate with the family of William Burness he kept the Parish school; Robert, who never neglected an opportunity of obtaining knowledge, cultivated his ac-

quaintance, and was his frequent companion in excursions among the hills and vales of Kyle, to look at the beauties of nature, animate and inanimate. He loved the memory of his gifted comrade, and enriched his biography with some interesting anecdotes. The Poet seems to have been fond of epistolary verse; but, in the specimen before me, he has chosen to move in fetters. The intricate measure of "The Cherry and the Slae," appears not to have impeded the flow of his thoughts nor the gracefulness of his expression.—"It was, I think," says Gilbert, "in summer 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of this Epistle." To retire from hard labour in the field to work in the garden at home, reminds me of the tender mercies of the north-country saying—"Bairns, when you're tired digging, you may pou kale-runts!"

"I was much pleased," continues Gilbert, "with the epistle, and said to him, I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment."

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince ! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.

MILTO

O THOU ! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To [illegible] poor wretches !

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be ;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel !

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame ;
Far kend and noted is thy name ;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far ;
An', faith ! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld-ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortries comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain:
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's the bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction ;
An' nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is :
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell !
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell !

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry sward,
In shady bow'r :

Then you, ye auld, snic-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows'd his ill tongu'd, wicked scawl,
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

The Prince and Power of the air is a favourite topic of rustic speculation. The peasantry complain that Milton has made Satan too acceptable to the fancy, and seem to prefer him, with his monkish attributes—horns, cloven-foot, and tail. An old shepherd told me he had, when a boy, as good as seen him.—"I was," said he, "returning from school, and stopped till the twilight, groping trouts in a burn, when a thunder-storm came on. I looked up, and just before me a cloud came down as dark as night—the queerest-shaped cloud I ever saw; and there was something terrible about it, for when it was close to me, I saw, as plain as I see you, a dark form within it, thrice the size of any earthly man. It was the Evil One himself—there's nae doubt o' that."—Samuel," I said, "did you hear his cloven-foot on the ground?"—"No," replied he, "but I saw ane o' his horns—and,

O what waves o' fire were rowing after him!"—"The Address to the Deil," says Currie, "is one of the happiest of the Poet's productions. Humour and tenderness are so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which preponderates." Jeffrey, too, felt the beautiful and relenting spirit in which the poem concludes. The Devil frequently makes his appearance in our old mysteries, but he comes to work unmitigated mischief, and we part with him gladly. The "Hornie, Satan, Nick, and Clootie," who lives in the imaginations of the peasantry, is not quite such a reprobate, though his shape is any thing but prepossessing. Nor is he an object of much alarm; a knowledge of the scriptures and a belief in heaven are considered sure protectors; and a peasant will brave a suspicious road at midnight if he can repeat a psalm.

The Poet touches on the leading topics of our superstitious beliefs; the solitary wanderings of the fiend, by lonely ruins, or among the haunts of man; his coalition with warlocks and witches, when spells are formed in kirk-yards, "owre howkit dead," which rob cows of their milk, cream of its butter, and matrimony of its joys. —"It was, I think," says Gilbert Burns, "in the winter of 1784, as we were going with carts for coals to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that Robert first repeated to me the 'Address to the Diel.' The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage."

THE AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS

AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,
A bonny gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's Meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonny bride:
An' sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'!

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, an' stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow :
At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed ;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle ;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle :
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
In guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fech't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith and pow'r,
'Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is,now thy bairn-time a';
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

It was the token of a true knight in chivalry to be kind to his charger. the Kyle farmer shares in the same feeling, for he is gentle, both in word and deed, to his "Auld Mare." He recollects when she bore him triumphantly home when mellow, from markets and other meetings: how she ploughed the stiffest land and faced the steepest brae, and moreover brought home his bonnie bride—

"Kyle-Stewart I could hae bragged wide,
For sic a pair."

The farmer's praise of his faithful servant contrasts strangely with Orleans' commendations of his horse in King Henry V.—" He bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hairs. When I bestride him I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air ; the earth sings when he touches it: the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes. It is the prince of palfreys : his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage." The Cid's praise of the peerless Bavieca is in a milder strain : in no fewer than one hundred Spanish ballads this noble animal is mentioned. I must have recourse to the fine version of Lockhart :—

" The king look'd on him kindly, as on a vassal true,
Then to the king Ruy Diaz spake, after reverence due—
' O king, the thing is shameful, that any man beside
The liege lord of Castille himself, should Bavieca ride.

" ' For neither Spain nor Araby could another charger bring,
So good as he, and certes, the best befits my king ;
But that you may behold him, and know him to the core,
I'll make him go as he was wont, when his nostrils smelt the Moor.' "

" There are three noble sights in nature," says an old authority : " a man thinking, an eagle flying, and a horse at full speed."

TO A HAGGIS.

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin, rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
'Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guid man, maist like to rive,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner!

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a Haggis!

The joyous nationality of this poem is but part of its merit. The "Haggis" forms one of the most savoury morsels in Scottish cookery; yet I have seen men in the south look wild at it who could swallow, without pausing, that singular mixture of fatness and sweetness —minced meat. Burns, it is said, once uttered something like this poem in prose when called on to say grace where a Haggis was on the board, and the applause which he obtained induced him to work it into verse. I heard, when a boy, the Address to the Haggis recited in a boon of reapers: an old highland bandsman listened with great attention; when these lines were repeated,—

> "Clap in his walie nieve a blade
> He'll mak it whissle,"

he could no longer contain himself, but cried out, "It's the God's truth! To make a steel blade whistle requires a man! There was Donald Bane, when sixty-six years old, and no sae souple as he had been, was called on to fight for the honour o' the broad sword, with a foreign braggart, 'Donald—said his chief—d'ye think yere yauld enough for him?' with that he whipt out his claymore— a broad bright bit o' steel it was—and made it whistle in the air like a hunting hawk; weel! away he gaed up the

Lawn-market to the strife, and ye'll na hinder some ane frae saying, 'Ah, Donald's failed; I doubt he'll no do!' When Donald heard this, I wish ye had seen but his ee—it glented fire—he lap right up into the air, and seizing a lamp-iron far aboon other men's reach, hung by ae hand for a moment, sprang proudly down, and cried, 'She'll *do* yet!' And he did do." The classical reader will perceive in this rustic reminiscence a resemblance to that fine passage in the "Odyssey," where Ulysses strung

> "His own huge bow, and with his right hand trill'd
> The nerve which in its quick vibration sang
> As with a swallow's voice."

The component parts of a Haggis are sometimes inquired anxiously into by men who love the pleasures of the table.—"Pray, sir," said a man of the south, "why do you boil it in a sheep's bag; and, above all, what is it made of?"—"Sir," answered a man of the north, "we boil it in a sheep's bag, because such was the primitive way; it was invented, sir, before linen was thought of: and as for what it is made of, I dare not trust myself with telling—I can never name all the savoury items without tears; and surely you would not wish me to expose myself in a public company?" A Haggis in the witty and whimsical "Noctes Ambrosianæ" of Blackwood, bursts when cut up over plate and table, floods the apartment, to the horror of the Ettrick Shepherd, and the astonishment of Christopher North.

A PRAYER

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU Great Being! what Thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

The following melancholy note accompanies these verses in the original manuscript of the Poet:—"There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and, indeed, effected the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the above."

A PRAYER

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
  Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
  Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
  Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast,
  Remonstrates I have done;

Thou knows't that Thou hast formed me,
  With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
  Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
  Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good! for such thou art,
  In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
  No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and goodness still
  Delighteth to forgive.

This Prayer justifies the remarks of Wordsworth.—"We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, many of the testimonies that others have borne against Burns:—but by his own hand—in words, the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views." In fits of despondency he looked darkly on the errors of his ways; and frailties, which to men of less sensibility, seemed venial, assumed hues which made him tremble. In these moods—and they were not unfrequent—indulgence at the table with his companions, profane wit, and trystings after twilight among the lasses of Kyle, grew into colossal enormities, and they pressed the harder on him because he felt that "passions, wild and strong," were ever ready to sweep resolutions of amendment away.

STANZAS

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
  Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
  Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
  Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
  I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way:
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be,
To rule their torrent in th'allowed line;
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

"The 'Prayer' and the 'Stanzas' were composed,' says Burns, "when fainting fits and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm." In another place he designates the Stanzas "Misgivings in the hour of despondency and prospect of death." Elsewhere he says in his Memoranda, "The grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that Being to whom we owe life with every enjoyment that renders life delightful."

A WINTER NIGHT.

> "Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are
> That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm!
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and window'd raggedness defend you,
> From seasons such as these?"
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-lived glow'r
Far south the lift,
Dim-darkening through the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreeths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or through the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

Listening, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And through the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stained roost, and sheep-cote spoiled
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, viewed the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain
Slow, solemn, stole:—

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumined man on brother man bestows!

See stern oppression's iron grip,
Or mad ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Even in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd luxury, flattery by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefined,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.
Where, where is love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly honour's lofty brow,
The powers you proudly own?
Is there, beneath love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden innocence a prey.
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps this hour, in misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,

And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!
Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill satisfied keen nature's clamorous call,
Stretched on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I hear nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hailed the morning with a cheer—
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impressed my mind—
Through all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

"Neither the subjects of his poems," says Wordsworth, speaking of Burns, "nor his manner of handling them, allow us long to forget their author. On the basis of his human character, he has reared a poetic one, which, with more or less distinctness, presents itself to view in almost every part of his earlier, and, in my estimation, his most valuable verses. This poetic fabric, dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity, is airy and spiritual; and though the materials in some parts are coarse, and the disposition is often fantastic and irregular, yet the whole is agreeable and strikingly attractive." The voice which the Poet hears amid the winter storm, utters sentiments in unison with those which the Poet claims as his own in the introduction. He prepares us for sympathizing in the sufferings of the human race by the description of the rivulets choked with snow; the cattle crowding to the shelter of some precipitous bank, and the birds, which cheered him with their songs in summer, sitting chittering among the leafless trees. Elsewhere he sings—

> "The birds sit chittering on the thorn,
> A' day they dined but sparely."

"This," says Carlyle, "is worth several homilies on mercy, for it is the voice of mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being: nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him."

THE JOLLY BEGGARS.

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

WHEN lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,
    Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte
And infant frosts begin to bite,
    In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
    O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore,
    To drink their orra duddies:
        Wi' quaffing and laughing,
            They ranted and they sang;
        Wi' jumping and thumping,
            The vera girdle rang.

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
    And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm—
    She blinket on her sodger:

An' ay he gies the tozie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an aumos dish.
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

AIR.

Tune—" *Soldiers', Joy.*"

I AM a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I serv'd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter
shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore;

A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

Tune—"*Soldier Laddie.*"

I ONCE was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade ;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church ;
He ventur'd the soul, and I risk'd the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got ;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair ;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup and a song ;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie ;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy
At length wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoitered up an' made a face ;
Then turn'd, an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

Tune—"*Auld Sir Symon.*"

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
Sir Knave is a fool in a session ;
He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held awa to the school ;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye hae of a fool ?

For drink I would venture my neck,
A hizzie's the half o' my craft,
But what could ye other expect,
Of ane that's avowedly daft ?

I ance, was ty'd up like a stirk,
For civilly swearing and quaffing ;
I ance, was abus'd in the kirk,
For touzling a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer ;
There's ev'n I'm tauld i' the court
A tumbler ca'd the premier.

Observ'd ye, yon reverend lad
Maks faces to tickle the mob ;
He rails at our mountebank squad,
Its rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry ;
The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
Gude L—d! he's far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then neist outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For monie a pursie she had hooked,
And had in mony a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie !
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—" *O an ye were dead, guidman.*"

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn,
The pleasure's that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappan limb and gausy middle,
He reach'd na higher.
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, an' upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' Allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

Tune.—*Whistle o'er the lave o't.*"

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,
And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be t'
And O! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about till Daddie Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o't
I am, &c.

Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,
And sun oursells about the dyke,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
   As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
   And draws a roosty rapier—

He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
   To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he wad from that time forth
   Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly ee, poor tweedle-dee
   Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
   And sae the quarrel ended.

But tho' his little heart did grieve
   When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
   When thus the caird address'd her;

Tune—" *Clout the caudron.*"

My bonny lass, I work in brass,
   A tinkler is my station:
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
   In this my occupation:

I've taen the gold, I've been enroll'd
 In many a noble squadron :
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
 To go and clout the caudron.
  I've taen the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
 Wi' a' his noise and caprin,
And tak a share wi' those that bear
 The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
 An' by that dear Keilbagie,*
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
 May I ne'er weet my craigie
  An' by that stowp, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
 In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
 An' partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
 That show'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
 An' made the bottle clunk
  To their health that night.

* A peculiar sort of whiskey.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie,
The fiddler * * * * * *
Behind the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,
Tho' limping wi' the spavie,
He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
And shor'd them Dainty Davie
O boot that night.



He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed,
Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had nae wish but—to be glad,
Nor want but—when he thirsted;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night.

Tune—"*For a' that, an' a' that.*"

I am a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that:
But Homer-like, the glowran byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, an' a' that:
But for how lang the flee may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft have put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's the sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth:
They toom'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowan drouth.
Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To loose his pack an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

Tune—" *Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses.*

SEE! the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where!
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day:
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sob r bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out—Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

This remarkable poem was written in the year 1785. Burns nowhere mentions it, which has induced some one to surmise that it is not his composition; but the authorship is established beyond doubt. The original manuscript was long in the hands of John Richmond of Mauchline, and he remembers taking the song of "Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou" with him to Edinburgh in 1786; it was given by the poet himself to Mr. Woodburn, factor to the laird of Craigengillan, and is now in the possession of Thomas Stewart of Greenock. Other evidence, equally decisive, can be afforded. The song of "For a' that and a' that," sung by the bard, is inserted, with some slight modifications in Johnson's Museum for February, 1790, and Burns is named as the author. But the poem speaks for itself.

Posie Nansie, in whose house the scene is laid, happened to be the mother of Racer Jess, who figures in the "Holy Fair:" her change-house stood in Mauchline, and was the favourite resort of lame sailors, maimed soldiers, wandering tinkers, travelling ballad-singers, and all such loose companions as hang about the skirts of society. Smith, the "slee and pawkie thief" of the Epistle, accom-

panied Burns into Nansie's howff one night, and saw the scene, which he has rendered immortal.

"The Jolly Beggars," says Sir Walter Scott, "for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet, even in describing the movements of such a group, the native taste of the Poet has never suffered his pen to slide into any thing coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags and crutches; the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade.

"Nor is the art of the Poet less conspicuous in the individual figures than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character: yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the southron. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp; a stroller, late the consort of an Highland ketterer or sturdy beggar,—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!' Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between a 'pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel, of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sing a song in character; and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected

with vivid poetical description, is not, perhaps, to be paralleled in the English language. The concluding ditty, chaunted by the ballad-singer at the request of the company, whose 'mirth and fun have now grown fast and furious,' and set them above all sublunary terrors of jails, and whipping-posts, is certainly far superior to any thing in the Beggar's Opera, where alone we could expect to find its parallel."

" Such a motley group of vagrants as Burns has so happily described," observes Cromek, " may yet be found in many districts of Scotland. There are houses of rendezvous where the maimed, supplicating soldier—the travelling, ballad-singing fiddler—the sturdy wench, with hands ever ready to steal the pittance which is not bestowed—the rough, black-bearded tinker, with his soldering-irons and pike-staff—and other children of real or pretended misfortune, assemble on a Saturday night to pawn their stolen clothes, dispose of their begged meal, and on their produce to hold merriment and revelry." One of that sturdy class of mendicants, so well painted by both poet and annotator, is still remembered in Nithsdale by the name of " Auld Penpont." This provincial worthy was a fellow of infinite drollery and rustic talent: he had a grave speech for the serious—could sing a psalm or pray upon occasion with the devout; but when he met with the young and the thoughtless, he was another man. He told wild stories, chanted wilder songs, and sometimes laid his wallets aside and performed a sort of rustic interlude, called " Auld Glenae," with no little spirit and feeling.

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers, they ha'e been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in h-ll
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, and bushes, kenn'd ay
Fra ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-taed leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

" Guid-een," quo' I ; " Friend ! hae ye been mawin,
When ither folk are busy sawin ?"
seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak ;
At length, says I, " Friend, whare ye gaun,
Will ye go back ?"

It spak right howe,—" My name is Death,
But be na' fley'd."—Quoth I, " Guid faith,
Ye're may be come to stap my breath ;
But tent me billie ;
I red ye weel, take care o' skaith,
See, there's a gully !"

" Guidman," quo' he, " put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle ;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd,
I wad na mind it, no, that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

" Weel, weel !" says I, " a bargain be't ;
Come, gies your hand, an' sae we're gree't ;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come, gies your news ;
This while ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house.

" Ay, ay !" quo' he, an' shook his head,
" It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath :
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.

" Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me ;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur me,

" Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan !
He's grown sae well acquaint wi' Buchan*
An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin
And pouk my hips.

" See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart ;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

* Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

"'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But-deil-ma-care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

"Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortified the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-runt.

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I nearhand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had kend it,
Just —— in a kail-blade, and send it,
As soon he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
At once he tells't.

" And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
He's sure to hae ;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

" Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees ;
True sal-marinum o' the seas ;
The farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty ;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

" Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons ;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd *per se ;*
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

" Waes me for Johnny Ged's Hole* now,"
Quo' I, " If that thae news be true !
His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
Sae white and bonie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew ;
They'll ruin Johnie !"

---

* The grave-digger.

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says, "Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirkyards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

"Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want of breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap an' pill.

"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

"A countra laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well.
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was laird himsel.

" A bonnie lass, ye kend her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame;
She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

" That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's w
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
An's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his d-mn'd dirt:

" But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead's a herrin':
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin'!"

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak' the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rais'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
And sae did Death.

This poem—a fine mixture of fancy and humour—was thought too personal for the Kilmarnock edition; but when success rendered the poet bolder, he printed it in the subscription volume of 1787, with notes intimating the object of the satire.—"This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook," said Burns, "is professionally a brother of the sovereign order of the ferula, but, by intuition and inspiration, he is at once apothecary, surgeon, and physician." In a note to the copy of his works presented to Dr. Geddes, the Poet says the hero of the poem is "John Wilson, schoolmaster, in Tarbolton." Of the person raised to this painful eminence, Gilbert Burns says, "To eke out the scanty subsistence allowed to his useful class he set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised that advice would be given, in common disorders, at the shop gratis. Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the Dominie made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions mentioned in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind: this set him to work for the rest of his way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me."

The traditior of the neighbourhood supplies a few particulars. On his way home, it is said, the Poet found a neighbour lying tipsy by the road-side: the idea of Death flashed on his fancy, and seating himself on the parapet

of a bridge, he composed the poem, fell asleep, and when awakened by the morning sun, he recollected it all, and wrote it down on reaching Mossgiel.

This took place in the seed-season of 1785, and an epidemical disorder was then raging in the country. Wilson soon afterwards quitted Tarbolton, and repairing to Glasgow engaged in mercantile pursuits, and achieved a moderate independence. He lives much respected for his religious feelings and his private worth.—"At Glasgow," says Cromek, in one of his interesting notes on Burns now before me, "I heard that the hero of this exquisite satire was living: Hamilton managed to introduce me to him—we talked of almost all subjects save the poems of Burns. Dr. Hornbook is above the middle size, stout made, and inclining to corpulency. His complexion is swarthy, his eye black and expressive: he wears a brown wig and dresses in black. There is little or nothing of the pedant about him: I think a man who had never read the poem would scarcely discover any. Burns, I am told, had no personal enmity to Wilson." Some will smile at the minute things remembered: the "bonnie lass," who suffered from ill-brewn drink, was an innkeeper's daughter: and the wife, whose "neives were scarce weel bred," was spouse to a westlin weaver.

"When Burns wrote," says Wordsworth, "his story of 'Death and Dr. Hornbook,' he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by his deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!—

'But whether she had three or four
He couldna tell.'

Behold a sudden apparition which disperses this disorder, and in a moments chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?"

My friend, Robert Chambers, has enabled me to complete the memoranda illustrative of this singular poem.—" In the neighbourhood of Tarbolton is situated the farm of Lochlea, where the Poet lived, as a humble denizen of his father' household, from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth year of his age. This, of course, was the clachan to which at that period he resorted for the pleasures of society. He formed here, in 1780, a club of young men, who met monthly for mutual improvement and entertainment, and of which he and his brother poet, David Sillar, were the leading members: the utmost extent of expenditure on any night was threepence. Here, also, was a lodge of freemasons, which he delighted to attend, and to whom he wrote a farewell, incorporated in his poems. The lodge still exists, and possesses among its records many letters from Burns, some written long after he was locally dissevered from the association, but still breathing an intense interest in its concerns. It was after attending a meeting of this lodge that he wrote his poem entitled 'Death and Doctor Hornbook,' the object of which was to burlesque the shoolmaster, who had offended him that night in the course of argument."

THE KIRK'S ALARM:*

A SATIRE.

ORTHODOX, orthodox,
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience;
There's a heretic blast
Has been blawn in the wast,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

Dr. Mac,† Dr. Mac,
You should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense
Upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf
To the church's relief,
And orator Bob‡ is its ruin.

* This poem was written a short time after the publication of Dr. M'Gill's Essay.

† Mr. M'Gill. ‡ Robert Aiken.

D'rymple mild,* D'rymple mild,
Tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

Rumble John,† Rumble John,
Mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adle,
And roar every note of the damn'd.

Simper James,‡ Simper James,
Leave the fair Killie dames,
There's a holier chace in your view;
I'll lay on your head,
That the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawney,§ Singet Sawney,
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evils await;
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul,
For the foul thief is just at your gate.

---

* Dr. Dalrymple. † Mr. Russell. ‡ Mr. M'Kinlay § Mr Moodie

Daddy Auld,* Daddy Auld,
There's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk ;
Though ye can do little skaith,
Ye'll be in at the death,
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bark.

Davie Bluster,† Davie Bluster,
If for a saint ye do muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits ;
Yet to worth let's be just,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

Jamy Goose,‡ Jamy Goose,
Ye ha'e made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked lieutenant ;
But the Doctor your's mark,
For the L—d's haly ark ;
He has cooper'd and cawd a wrong pin in't.

Poet Willie,§ Poet Willie,
Gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your liberty's chain and your wit ;
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh—t.

* Mr. Auld. † Mr. G——, O——. ‡ Mr. Young. § Mr. Peebles, Ayr.

Andro Gouk,* Andro Gouk,
Ye may slander the book,
And the book not the waur, let me tell ye;
Ye are rich, and look big,
But lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll ha'e a calf's head o' sma' value.

Barr Steenie,† Barr Steenie,
What mean ye, what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may ha'e some pretence
To havins and sense,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

Irvine side,‡ Irvine side,
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share,
Ye've the figure, 'tis true,
Even your faes will allow,
And your friends they dare grant you nae mair.

Muirland Jock,§ Muirland Jock,
When the L—d makes a rock
To crush Common Sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit,
There's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

* Dr. A. M——ll. † Mr. S——n Y——, B—r.
‡ Mr. S——h, G——. § Mr. S——d.

Holy Will,* Holy Will,
There was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant,
When ye're ta'en for a saint,
Wha should swing in a rape for a hour.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your spir'tual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o' lead.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns,
Wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your muse is a gipsie,
E'en tho' she were tipsie,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

The history of the "Kirk's Alarm" is curious:—"Macgill and Dalrymple," says Lockhart, "the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of Original Sin and the Trinity; and the former at length published an essay, which was considered as

* An Elder in Mauchline.

demanding the notice of the church courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this: and at last, Dr. Macgill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his congregation from the pulpit, which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of Macgill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unreproached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused with far more fervid zeal the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were, of course, on the side of Macgill—Auld and the Mauchline elders, with his enemies. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of Macgill's cause before the Presbytery, and, I believe, also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance which soon ripened into a warm friendship with Burns. Burns was, therefore, from the beginning, a zealous, as in the end he was, perhaps, the most effective partizan of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation."

The eloquence of Aiken and the wit of Hamilton were deeply felt and resented by the partizans of the Old Light. The hue and cry against the latter drew these words of condolence from Burns:—"You have erred—you have committed the blasphemous heresies of squaring religion by the rules of common sense, and attempting to give a consistent character to Almighty God, and a rational account of his proceedings with the sons of men."—"Mr. Hamilton," says Chambers, "lived in a half-fortified old mansion near the church, form-

ing the only remains of the ancient priory. He was the son of a gentleman who had practised the same profession in the same place, and was, in every respect, a most estimable member of society—generous, affable, and humane. Unfortunately, his religious practice did not square with the notions of the then minister of Mauchline, the 'Daddy Auld' of Burns' Poems, who, in 1785, is found in the session-records to have summoned him for rebuke, on the four following charges:—1. Unnecessary absence from church, for five consecutive Sundays; 2. Setting out on a journey to Carrick on a Sunday; 3. Habitual, if not total, neglect of family worship; 4. Writing an abusive letter to the session in reference to some of their former proceedings respecting him. Strange though this prosecution may seem, it was strictly accordant with the right assumed by clergymen at that period to inquire into the private habits of parishioners." The Poet speaks of his own "priest-skelping turns;" probably he alludes rather to what he said, than what he wrote.—"Polemical divinity," he says, when speaking of this period to Dr. Moore, "was putting the country half-mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, at funerals, &c., used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised the hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour." Nor has it yet subsided.—"His morals, sir," said a peasant of the land of Burns to an anxious inquirer, "werena very gude; and as for religion, I'll uphaud he was a rank Unitarian." Some of the names of the persons in this satiric drama are printed in full in the notes; others are purposely left in obscurity.

THE TWA HERDS.

OR,

THE HOLY TULZIE.

O' a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,
About the dykes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast,
These five and twenty simmers past,
O ! dool to tell,
Ha'e had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsel.

O, Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
And think it fine:
The Lord's cause ne'er got sic a twistle
Sin' I ha'e min'.

O, sirs! whae'er wad ha'e expeckit
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank,
He let them taste,
Frae Calvin's well, ay clear they drank,—
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock, and tod,
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kend the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa should disagreet,
An' names, like villain, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi'en,
While new New-Light herds, wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither's liein'!

A' ye wha tent the gospell faud,
There's D——n, deep, and Peebles, shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, Sirs, how we're beset;
There's scarce a new herd that we get
But comes frae 'mang that cursed set
I winna name;
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
M'Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
And that curs'd rascal ca'd M'—e,
And baith the Shaws,
That aft ha'e made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld W—w lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought ay death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turn-coats amang oursel,
There's Smith for ane,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To cow the lairds,
And get the brutes the powers themsels
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'—e's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

"The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light," says Burns to Dr. Moore, "was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my 'Holy Fair.' I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clear. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause." The actors in this indecent drama were—Moodie, Minister of Riccartoun, and Russell, helper to the Minister of Kilmarnock, who afterwards had a harmonious call to Stirling. They were apostles of the Old Light, but this did not hinder controversy, and whilst indulging in a discussion on Effectual Calling, on their way home from the Monday

sermon of a Sacrament, they quarrelled by the way, and, as some assert, proceeded to blows. The first intimation which the world of Kyle had of this "bitter black outcast," was from Russell himself, who was seen approaching the house of Barlieth at full gallop.—"Wha can this be riding in sic a daft-like manner?" exclaimed one. —"It's awfu' like our ain Minister, honest man;" said another.—"That can never be," said John Parker, a decorous man and an elder—"and yet it's him. Na, I'll no believe my ain een!" The doubts of his elder were cut short by the Minister himself halting, and explaining the cause of his galloping. On inquiring long afterwards of a person who was present with Parker what Russell said, he replied that he heard him say something about the unsound doctrine of Moodie; how hot words ensued, and he was obliged to give his brother's horse a crack across the nose to put it and its rider back.—"But ye wadna believe me now, if I were to tell you that I think he missed the horse, and hit the Minister. Black Russel was na sparing!"

These satiric sallies were not unavenged by the children of the Old Light. They called Burns unbeliever, profane scoffer, and ungodly rhymer—epithets of influence in those days: and they moreover represented, that the Bachelor's Club of Mauchline, where the Poet presided, met for other than moral purposes. Their language was reported as loose, their toasts indecorous, and one of the elders, it is said, having caught up two or three wild stanzas scattered by Burns at one of those mirthful meetings, kept repeating them wherever he went, saying, at the end of every verse, "Oh, what a wild lad! A lost sheep—a lost sheep!"

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Whar damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample;
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example,
To a' thy flock.

But yet, O L——d! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
And sometimes, too, wi warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I trow—
But L—d, that Friday I was fou,
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this fleshly thorn,
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—d, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race:
But G—d confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
And public shame.

L—d, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at carts,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
Wi' grit and sma',
Frae G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa.

An' whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;—
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against the presbyt'ry of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, L—d, mak it bare
Upo' their heads,
L—d weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin, shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While he wi' hingin lips and snakin',
Held up his head.

L—d, in the day of vengeance try him,
L—d, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r;
But for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, L—d, remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Taks up its last abode;
His saul has ta'en some other way.
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor, silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the grun
Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance you've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye hae nane;
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,
And mercy's day is gaen.

But hear me, sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

The "Holy Willie" of this sarcastic but too daring poem, was one William Fisher, a farmer near Mauchline, and leading Elder of the Reverend Mr. Auld's Session. He was a great pretender to sanctity, austere of speech, and punctilious about outward observances. Yet he was by no means rigid as far as regarded himself: he scrupled not to "get fou," when whiskey flowed at the expense of others. he was more particular, too, in the examination of female transgressors than some of his brethren thought was seemly; and when he left Mauchline for an eldership in a neighbouring parish he had a sore fall, for it is said he made free with the money of the poor. Burns prophetically intimates Willie's leaning to the latter vice—

> "And sometimes, too, wi' worldly trust
> Vile self gets in."

His end was any thing but godly: he drank more than was proper during one of his visits to Mauchline, and was found dead in a ditch on the way to his own house.

Burns loved to give vent to his satiric propensities in prayers such as that uttered by "Holy Willie." On one occasion a friend of his had aided in the summary punishment—sanctioned by old custom—of a girl belonging to an innkeeper, who had been too indulgent to one of the male customers. The law was angry, and the aggressor fled to the woods, but returned to his father's house late on Saturday night, knowing that he was free on the Sabbath. He met Burns on one of these occasions, and related his story: the Poet laughed—mused a little, and said, "Adam, you have much need of some one to pray for you."—"I wish you would do it, Robert," said the other, "I know no one so fit." Burns immediately composed a prayer, of which some stanzas are still remembered;—it is explanation sufficient to say that "Geordie" and "Nanse" were the girl's master and mistress, and chief

instigators of the prosecution. He commences by making his friend complain of "scrimpit stature," and of bodily inability to endure the hornings and houndings of law*: he then describes his privations and fears :—

"And now I'm derned in glens and hallows,
And hunted, as was William Wallace,
By constables, those blackguard fallows,
And bailies baith :
The Lord preserve us frae the gallows,
That cursed death !"

He next demands vengeance on his persecutors :—

"Auld, grim, black-bearded Geordie's sel'
O ! shake him owre the mouth o' hell,
And let him hing, and roar and yell,
Wi' hideous din :
An', if he offers to rebel,
Just heave him in.

"When Death comes in, wi' glimmering blink,
And tips auld drunken Nanse the wink,
May Hornie gie her doup a clink
Ahint his yett,
And fill her up wi' brimstone drink,
Red reeking het !"

John Richmond of Mauchline says, that when he was a clerk in Gavin Hamilton's office, Burns came in one morning and said, "I have just been making a poem, and if you will write it, John, I'll repeat it." He accordingly, to Richmond's surprise, repeated "Holy Willie's Prayer :" Hamilton came in, read it, and ran laughing with it to Robert Aiken—and Aiken was delighted.

THE INVENTORY;

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF THE TAXES.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graith,
To which I'm clear to gi'e my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.
My lan' afore's* a gude auld has been,
An' wight an' wilfu' a' his days been.
My lan' ahin's† a weel gaun fillie,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,‡
An' your auld burro' mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime—
But ance, whan in my wooing pride,
I like a blockhead boost to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
(L—d pardon a' my sins an' that too!)
I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,
She's a' bedevil'd with the spavie.

---

* The fore-horse on the left-hand in the plough.
† The hindmost on the left-hand in the plough.
‡ Kilmarnock.

My Fur ahin's* a wordy beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd.
The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
A d—n'd red wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a Cowt o' Cowt's the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail.
If he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least—
Wheel carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;
Ae auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
Ae leg an' baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
'An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run de'ils for rantin' an' for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t'other.
Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother.
I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
An' aften labour them completely;
An' ay on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the question targe them tightly;
Till, faith, wee Davock's turn'd sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,
As fast as ony in the dwalling.

* The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough.

I've nane in female servan' station,
(L—d keep me ay frae a' temptation !)
I ha'e nae wife—and that my bliss is,
An' ye have laid na tax on misses ;
An' then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils dare nae touch me.
Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heav'n sent me ane mae than I wanted.
My sonsie smirking dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace ;
But her, my bonnie sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L—d ! ye'se get them a' thegither.

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I'm takin' ;
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle ;
My travel a' on foot I'll shank it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit,
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain hand I've wrote it,
The day and date as under noted ;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic ROBERT BUR

These lines were written in answer to a mandate sent by the surveyor of the windows, carriages, &c. to each farmer, ordering him to send a signed list of his horses, servants, wheel-carriages, &c., and whether he was a married man or a bachelor, likewise the number of his children. The poem is chiefly remarkable for the information which it gives concerning the farm, the household, and the habits of Burns. Mossgiel lies a short mile distant from Mauchline; nor has cultivation prevailed against the cold clay-bottom which, with untimely rains, brought ruin to the poet's labours: it is, I have been informed, more suitable for grazing than cropping, and at this period produces excellent cheese. "Mauchline," says the correct and lively Chambers, "is a parish town of above a thousand inhabitants, in ancient times the seat of a Priory belonging to Melrose, but now differing in no respect from a common agricultural village. It is situated upon a slope ascending from the margin of the Ayr, from which it is about two miles distant. One might at first suppose that a rustic population like that of Mauchline would form but a poor field for the descriptive and satirical genius of Burns. It is wondrous, however, how variously original many of the inhabitants of the most ordinary Scotch village will contrive to be. In a small town the character of every man is well known, so that every thing he says or does appears to his fellows as characteristic." Fife has supplied Wilkie—and long may it continue to supply my friend—with original characters: Ayrshire afforded Burns all his most natural portraits; the more sequestered places of Scotland abound with originality. In one pastoral vale, if you find eighty people, you may say you have found sixty original characters.

THE HOLY FAIR..

A robe of seeming truth and trust
  Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
  The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
  Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
  He wrapt him in Religion.

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
  When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
  An snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston muirs,
  Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin down the furs,
  The lav'rocks they were chantin'
    Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
  To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
  Cam skelpin up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
  But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
  Was in the fashion shining,
    Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes ;
Their visage wither'd, lang, an' thin,
An' sour as any slaes :
The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, " Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me ;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak,
An' taks me by the hands,
" Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en the feck,
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

" My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye hae ;
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline holy fair,
To spend an hour in daffin :
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith we'se hae fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' graith
Gaed hoddin by their cottars;
There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
Are springin' o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
An' farls bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr black bonnet throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they'r gath'rin',
Some carrying dails, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy blethrin'
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
An' screen our countra gentry,
There, racer Jess, and twa-three wh-res,
Are blinkin' at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin' jades,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
An' there a batch o' wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock
For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes ;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays :
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces ;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
He sweetly does compose him ;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
 Is silent expectation :
For Moodie speels the holy door,
 Wi' tidings o' d-mn-tion.
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
 'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
 To's ain het hame had sent him
  Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
 Wi' rattlin an' wi' thumpin' !
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
 He's stampin an' he's jumpin' !
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
 His eldritch squeel and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
 Like cantharidian plasters,
  On sic a day.

But, hark ! the tent has chang'd its voice ;
 There's peace an' rest nae langer :
For a' the real judges rise,
 They canna sit for anger.
Smith opens out his cauld harangues,
 On practice and on morals ;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
 To gie the jars an' barrels
  A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral pow'rs and reason ?
His English style, an' gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum ;
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum :
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While Common-Sense has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,*
Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller, neist the guard relieves,
An' orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables :
But, faith ! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them ;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

* A street so called, which faces the tent in Mauchline.

Now but an' ben, the Change-house fills,
  Wi' yill-caup commentators :
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
  An' there the pint stowp clatters ;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
  Wi' logic, an' wi' scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
  Is like to breed a rupture
    O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink ! it gies us mair
  Than either school or college :
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
  It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
  Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
  To kittle up our notion
    By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
  To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
  An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
  They're making observations ;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
  An' formin' assignations
    To meet some day.

But now the L—d's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin',
An' echoes back return the shouts:
Black Russell is na spairin':
His piercing words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
Our vera sauls does harrow*
Wi' fright that day.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin flame, an' scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neebor snorin'
Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
How monie stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
Amang the furms an' benches:
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

* Shakspeare's Hamlet.

In comes a gaucie, gash guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife,
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives be mindfu', ance yoursel
How bonnie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin tow,
Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin
May end in houghmagandie
Some ither day.

The names of persons in this satiric drama are given from the Poet's manuscripts; more about them will be found in the note to "The Ordination." The scene is laid in the church-yard of Mauchline the clergyman of the parish, with his assistants, are exhibited on the stage, while the lay members of the congregation, swelled by auxiliary weavers from Kilmarnock, compose the numerous persons of the under-plot of the piece. The Poet seems at first to have contemplated the introduction of allegorical figurantes. The parts which Fun, Hypocrisy, and Superstition have alloted to them in conceiving the poem have not been indicated; and, perhaps, it was but the aim of the Poet to awaken the attention of the reader to the scenes of fun, superstition, and hypocrisy which he proposed to disclose on "the holy spot," where he desired to meet them.

In these personages he had his eye on Fergusson's poem of "Leith Races:"—

"In July month, ae bonny morn,
When Nature's [illegible] green,
Was spread o'er ilk[illegible]orn,
To charm our rov[illegible];

> [illegible] saw a quean,
> The [illegible] th the lift
> Her [illegible] e siller sheen,
> Her [illegible] lawy drift,
> [illegible] ae white that day

This personage upbraids Fergusson for going idly musing along the streets of Edinburgh, when he should be at Leith races to observe and sing of the fun and folly of mankind, the poet naturally inquires the name of his fair counsellor, she answers, like Fun in the "Holy Fair,"—

> 'I dwell among the cauler springs,
> That weet the land o cakes
> And often tune my canty strings
> At bridals and late wakes
> They ca me MIRTH —I ne er was ken d
> To grumble or look sour
> But blithe wad be a lift to lend,
> Gif ye wad sey my power,
> And pith this day

Mirth, in her allegorical quality, neglects to accompany the Poet to the races—though he meets "wi' muckle fun and daffin"—"There are traits of infinite merit," says Jeffrey, "in 'Scotch Drink,' 'The Holy Fair,' 'The Hallow E'en,' and several of the songs, in all of which it is very remarkable that he rises occasionally into a strain of beautiful description or lofty sentiment, far above the pitch of his original conception"

THE ORDINATION.

"For sense they little owe to frugal heav'n—
To please the mob they hide the little giv'n."

KILMARNOCK wabsters fidge an' claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations ;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations,
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations ;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder ;[*]
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
An' Russell sair misca'd her ;
This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
And he's the boy will blaud her !
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

* Alluding to a scoffing ballad which [illegible]ade on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr. Lindsay to [illegible] Laigh Kirk.

Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham * leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a niger;
Or Phineas † drove the murdering blade,
Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah, ‡ the scauldin' jad,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;
And gie him o'er the flock, to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin,
Spare them nae day.

* Genesis ix. 22. † Numbers xxv. 8. ‡ Exodus iv. 25.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' runts o' grace the pick and wale,
No gi'en by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin':
Come, screw the pegs, wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
An' a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day!

Lang Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin',
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischief was brewin';
And like a godly elect bairn
He's wal'd us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

Now, Robinson, harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever:
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton repair,
And turn a carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

Mutrie and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
Just like a winkin' baudrons:
And ay' he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein through the city;
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow its unco pretty:
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

But there's Morality himsel',
Embracing all opinions ;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions ;
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin' onions !
Now there—they're packed aff to hell
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

O, happy day ! rejoice, rejoice !
Come bouse about the porter !
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter :
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture :
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here's, for a conclusion,
To every New Light * mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion :

* "New Light" is a cant phrase, in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.

If mair they deave us with their din,
Or Patronage intrusion,
We'll light a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion
Like oil, some day.

John Russell, minister of Kilmarnock, against whom Burns bent the bitterest shafts of his satire, was a very remarkable man. For all that is graceful in expression, or vivid in delineation in the following sketch, I am indebted to Hugh Millar, mason in Cromarty.—" Russell came from Moray; he obtained the school of Cromarty, was no favourite with the scholars, and was one of those who mistake severity for duty. He was a large, robust, dark-complexioned man, imperturbably grave, fierce of temper, and had a stern expression of countenance. It is said that a lady, who had been one of his pupils, actually fainted when she heard him, many years afterwards, speak of transgressions from the pulpit. One of his boys, who usually carried the key of the school in his pocket, happened to lose it one day, and got such a flogging that, when he grew to be a man, in all cases of mental perturbation and misery he groped in his pocket, as he did on that fatal morning for the key. He became popular as a preacher: his manner was strong and energetic: the severity of his temper was a sort of genius to him while he described, which he loved to do, the tortures of the wicked in a future state. He printed some of his sermons: they are of a controversial nature, and written in a bold, rough style, and fitter to be listened to than read. He set himself against sabbath-breaking; and used to take his stand at one of the streets leading from the town, and turn transgressors back by the shoulders."

"It was not an unwelcome call to some of the citizens, which took Russell from Cromarty to a chapel of ease in Kilmarnock. A native of Cromarty, who happened to be at that time in the west of Scotland, walked to Mauchline to hear his old schoolmaster preach at the Sacrament;—this was about 179[illegible]. There was an excellent sermon to be heard from the tent, and excellent drink to be had in a neighbouring ale-house, and between the two the people seemed much divided. A young clergyman was preaching, and Russell was nigh him: at every fresh movement of the people, or ungodly burst of sound from the ale-house, the latter would raise himself on tiptoe—look sternly towards the change-house, and then at his younger brother in the pulpit: at last his own time to preach arrived--he sprang into the tent—closed the bible--and without psalm or prayer, or other preliminary matter, burst out at once in a passionate and eloquent address upon the folly and sin which a portion of the people were committing. The sound in the ale-house ceased—the inmates came out and listened to the denunciation, which some of them remembered with a shudder in after-life. He lived to a great age, and was always a dauntless and intrepid man: when seventy years old or so, he saw a Cromarty man beaten down in the streets of Stirling: Russell elbowed the crowd aside, plucked the sufferer, like a brand from the burning, saying—'Waes me, that your father's son should behave like a blackguard in the town where I am a minister.' He grew temperate in his sermons as he grew old, and became a great favourite with the more grave and staid portion of his people." In look and manner, and fortitude of character, Russell seems to have resembled the Poet not a little. "The Ordination" is the only one of Burns' Old Light satires which he admitted into the first edition: it was written when Mackinlay was called to Kilmarnock.

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. MR. JAMES STEVEN,

On his Text, MALACHI IV. 2.—" And they shall go forth, and grow up, like CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
Though Heretics may laugh;
For instance; there's yoursel' just now,
God knows, an unco Calf!

And should some patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a Stirk.

But, if the lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly power,
You e'er should be a Stot!

Tho', when some kind, connubial dear,
Your but-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
"Here lies a famous Bullock!"

"The Calf" had a singular origin. One Sunday, Gavin Hamilton said to the Poet—"Come and dine with me after you return from the Kirk, and be sure and remember the text." The preacher was a young man of the name of James Steven, and it was his fate to preach from the text which introduces the poem. Burns, who seems to have been but little edified, remembering his promise to Hamilton, composed a rhyming satire on the minister from his own text, and repeated it when he sat down to dinner with his friend. The Poet had no personal dislike to his victim—and desired his lampoon to be looked upon merely as a poetic sally. The name, however, stuck to the preacher;—and I observe, in one of the letters to Burns from his younger brother, who died in London, the following passage, dated 21st March, 1790:—"We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon to hear the 'Calf' preach: he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever."

TO JAMES SMITH.

> "Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
> Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
> I owe thee much!——"
>
> BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the sleest, paukie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
Just gaun to see you;
And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair ta'en I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on every feature
She's wrote, the Man.

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon :
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin' ?

Some rhyme a neighbour's name to lash ;
Some rhyme (vain thought !) for needfu' cash ;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An' raise a din ;
For me, an aim I never fash ;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's ta'en a sklent,
To try my fate in guid black prent;
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries " Hoolie !
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors,
A' future ages ;
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

Then farewell hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows !
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread ;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone !

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care o'er side !
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin', hirplin' owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin'
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;
An' fareweel dear, deluding woman!
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at the expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim some fortune chase;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan'
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
'Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Pow'rs," and warm implore
"Tho' I should wander terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour!
And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.
But give me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces,
In your unletter'd nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise ;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattling squad :
I see you upward cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

The James Smith to whom this admirable epistle is addressed, was a shopkeeper in Mauchline during the Poet's sojourn in the west: not succeeding there, he established a calico printing manufactory at Avon, near Linlithgow; and while there we find Burns, in April, 1788, informing him of having married "a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussey" of his acquaintance, and desiring him to send one of his best printed shawls, as he had a wish that the first present he made her should be the work of one whose friendship he counted on as a life-rent lease. This friendship was not to last. Smith failed in his speculations, and sailed for the West Indies, where he did not live long. He was a person of ready wit, lively manners, and much respected by the Poet: the compliments paid to

him in this poem are worthy of having lived for.—"The poems," says Currie, "as well as the letters of Burns, may be considered as the effusions of his sensibility and the transcript of his own musings on the real incidents of his humble life." This is a just remark; and it may be added, that the Poet was fond of emptying his heart in rhyming epistles: he never appears more at his ease or happier in his handling.

"Where can we find," says Professor Walker, "a more exhilarating enumeration of the enjoyments of youth, contrasted with their successive extinction as age advances, than in the epistle to James Smith?" Yet, though the Poet includes himself in the number of

> "The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
> The rattling squad,"

we know that, when he penned these words, his expenses did not exceed seven pounds a-year; and that, as one of his fellow-peasants said, "he just drank a glass or sae like ony other body." Smith, it will be remembered, accompanied Burns to Posie Nansie's, when "The Jolly Beggars" dawned on his fancy.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.*

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
An' hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin'-tree
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin';
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin'.

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* Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his "Cath-Loda," vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae thing,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

When, click! the string the snick did draw:
And, jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin' bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, gracefu' round her brows,
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
Wou'd soon been broken.

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace"
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
'Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie Jean
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A well known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were toss't:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern ;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race* heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows ;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour,† mark him well !
Bold Richardton's‡ heroic swell ;
The chief on Sark§ who glorious fell,
In high command ;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

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* The Wallaces.

† William Wallace.

‡ Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.

§ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought Anno 1448. The glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade*
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,†
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,)
In musing mood,
An aged judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe‡
The learned sire and son I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw;
That, to adore.

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* Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coils-field, where his burial-place is still shown.
† Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice-Clerk, (Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
‡ Catrine, the seat of Professor Dugald Stewart.

Brydone's brave ward* I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly-seeming fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail! my own inspired bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

* Colonel Fullarton.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits, pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And, when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild, poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

"Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel lays;'
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the lab'ring hind,
The artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some, strongly, rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

" Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard;
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

" Of these am I—Coila my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

" With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays,
Of other times.

" I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'rets birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

" I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends ;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

" Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow ;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art ;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

" Yet, all beneath the unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows ;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

" Then never murmur nor repine ;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine ;
And, trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor king's regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the dignity of man,
With soul erect;
And trust, the universal plan
Will all protect.

And wear thou this"—she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

Few have been so hardy as to find fault with this poem; even Jeffrey, in his depreciating estimate of the man and the poet, says,—"The only pieces that can be classed under the head of pure fiction, are the 'Brigs of Ayr,' and 'The Vision.' In the last there are some vigorous and striking lines." What is pure fiction? many of the poems of Burns have an equal right with "The Vision" to be classed with works of fiction.

Much of the man is in all Burns' productions; in the history of this poem we may read some of the vicissitudes of his love and friendship. In the original manuscript, the verse which descends into particulars about Coila, claimed for her a leg as straight, and tight, and tapering as that of Jean Armour, the destruction of the marriage

lines brought a blight on his affection—he dethroned her in his Kilmarnock edition, and raised up another in her stead :—

> "Down flowed her robe, a tartan sheen,
> Till half a leg was scrimply seen,
> And such a leg! my Bess, I ween,
> Could only peer it
> Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
> Nane else came near it."

Old affection triumphed by the time the Edinburgh edition was printed, and Jean was with pomp restored. Having extended his friendships after the first edition, he enlarged the robe of Coila, and emblazoned it with the history of the Wallaces who fought and were victorious at Stirling and Sark. This heroic race were not mentioned before. He also admitted others of a later day to the honours of the mantle ; and gave Coila more than she could well bear.—"Burns," says Carlyle, "is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of his strength—the piercing emphasis with which he thought, may give an humble, but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his? words more memorable by their burning vehemence—by their cool vigour and their laconic pith?"

HALLOWEEN.*

[The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.]

> "Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
> The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
> To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
> One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
>
> GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light,
  On Cassilis Downans† dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
  On sprightly coursers prance;

* Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the Fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.

Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
  Beneath the moon's pale beams ;
There, up the cove,* to stray an' rove
  Amang the rocks an' streams
        To sport that night.

Amang the bonnie, winding banks
  Where Doon rins, wimplin', clear,
Where Bruce† ance rul'd the martial ranks,
  An' shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
  Together did convene,
To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
  An' haud their Halloween
        Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
  Mair braw than when they're fine ;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
  Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin' :
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
  Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
  Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
        Whiles fast at night.

* A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean ; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.

† The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

Then, first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks* maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' graip an' wale,
For muckle anes an' straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd through the bow-kail,
An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee-things, todlin', rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the custoc's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne cozicly, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've placed them
To lie that night.

* The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn ;*
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn :
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast ;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses ;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kiuttlin' in the fause-house†
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel hoordet nits‡
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads an' lasses fates
Are there that night decided :
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly ;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

* They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stackbuilder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind : this he calls a fause-house.

‡ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel':
He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
'Till, fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swoor, by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
'Till white in ase they're sobbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stowlins, prie'd her bonie mou',
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel:
She through the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins graipit for the bauks,
And in the blue-clue* throws then,
Right fear't that night.

An' ay she win't, an' ay she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin';
'Till something held within the pat,
Guid L—d! but she was quaukin'!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin'
To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, graunie?
I'll eat the apple† at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnie:"

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions:—Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand "wha hauds?" i. e. who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.

† Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before

She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul Thief onie place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' died deleeret
On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,—
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' ay a rantin' kirn we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow:
He's sin' gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel,
And he made unco light o't;
But monie a day was by himsel',
He was sae sairly frighted
That very night."

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense;
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin;

* Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat, now and then, "Hemp seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person

An' ev'ry now an' then he says
"Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, an' draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistl'd up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
'Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld cam rinnin' out,
An' hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
'Till, stop; she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but Grumphie
Asteer that night!

invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me, and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me, and harrow thee."

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen.
  To win three wechts o' naething;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
  She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
  An' twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
  In hopes to see Tam Kipples
      That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
  An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca'
  Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattled up the wa',
  An' she cried, L—d, preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
  An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
      Fu' fast that night.

* This charm must likewise be performed, unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible: for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time, an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice ;
  They hecht him some fine braw ane ;
It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,*
  Was timmer-propt for thrawin' ;
He taks a swirlie auld moss oak,
  For some black, grousome carlin ;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
  'Till skin in blypes cam haurlin'
          Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
  A's canty as a kittlen ;
But, Och ! that night, amang the shaws,
  She got a fearfu' settlin' !
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
  An' owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Where three lairds' lands met at a burn,†
  To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
          Was bent that night.

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bean-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

† You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake : and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimpl't ;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays ;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't ;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle ;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon :
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool ;
Near lav'rock-height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, an' in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three* are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed :

* Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it

Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
  Sin' Mar's year did desire,
Because he gat the toom-dish thrice,
  He heav'd them on the fire
    In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
  I wat they did na weary;
An' unco tales, an' funnie jokes,
  Their sports were cheap an' cheery;
Till butter'd so'ns,* wi' fragrant lunt,
  Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
  They parted aff careerin'
    Fu' blythe that night.

The ancient festival of Halloween is now sinking into disuse: in my early days it was generally observed by the bulk of the Scottish population. Nor did it remain sung till the days of Burns. A poem called Halloween, m the muse of my friend John Mayne, appeared in Ruddiman's Magazine for November, 1780;—some of the verses are striking and curious, and seem to have been known to the Poet of Ayrshire:—

foretels, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

* Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween supper.

"Of a' the festivals we hear
Frae Handsel-Munday till new-year,
There's few in Scotland held mair dear
For mirth, I ween,
Or yet can boast o' better cheer,
Than Halloween.

"Placed at their head the gudewife sits,
And deals round apples, pears and nits,
Syne tells her guests how at sic bits
Where she has been,
Bogles hae gart fawk tyne their wits
On Halloween.

"Grieved she recounts how wi' mischance
Puir poossie's forced a' night to prance
Wi' fairies, wha in thousands dance
Upon the green,
Or sail wi' witches owre to France
On Halloween.

"And when they've trimm'd ilk heaped plate,
And a' things are laid out o' gate,
To ken their matrimonial mate
The youngsters keen
Search a' the dark decrees o' fate
On Halloween.

"A' things prepared in order due,
Gosh guides! what fearfu' pranks ensue!
Some i' the kiln-pat thraw a clew,
At whilk bedeen
Their sweethearts by the far end pu,
At Halloween.

"Ithers, wi' some uncanny gift,
In ane auld barn a riddle lift,
Where thrice, pretending corn to sift,
Wi' charms between,
Their jo appears, as white as drift,
At Halloween."

The scene where the Halloween of Burns is laid is on the romantic coast of Ayrshire: the cove of Colean, haunted in the days of the Bard, by the fairies, gave shelter to Bruce and his intrepid followers when he planned the storming of Turnberry castle.

Of the fairies who, on sprightly coursers, rode on Cassillis-Downans, we have from Burns but a brief account;—the tale of Tamlane lets us more into the secret of their midnight doings;—tradition adds a few particulars. They were not a mischievous race: they loved romantic hills and lonely valleys—they were fond of music and of children—their dress is invariably described as green—their heads bare, and their hair long and of a golden hue. The horses on which they rode were from fairy land, had small bells at their manes, long tails, and were of a cream-colour. The musical instruments of these spiritual people were corn-pipes and bog-reeds—but they could extract divine harmony out of an ordinary whistle. They loved bread baked of new meal: milk, warm from the cow, and honey dropt from the comb. They had the power of blessing or of cursing families and flocks, and never overlooked an ill deed nor forgot a favour. It is generally admitted that they left our land about seventy years ago: their mournings and moanings among the hills on the Hallowmass night of their departure—according to the assertion of an old shepherd—were melancholy to hear.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
  Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wandered forth
  Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man whose aged step
  Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
  And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
  Began the rev'rend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
  Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
  Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
  The miseries of man.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride:
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mispending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then age and want—oh! ill-match'd pair!—
Show man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of fate,
  In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
  Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in every land,
  All wretched and forlorn!
Thro' weary life this lesson learn—
  That man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
  Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
  Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
  The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
  Makes countless thousands mourn!

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
  So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
  To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
  The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
  And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend—
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour, my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn!
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn.

"Several of the poems," Gilbert Burns observes, "were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy 'Man was made to mourn,' was composed." An old Scottish ballad had some share in giving life and language to these emotions.—"I had an old granduncle," thus the Poet writes to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years. The good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man.'" From the Poet's venerable mother, Mr. Cromek procured a copy of this composition; it commences thus:—

"Upon the sixteen hunder year
Of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, who bought us dear,
As writings testify;
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah, man was made to moan!"

The pious minstrel proceeds to compare the life of man to the seasons—five years of his "course" are considered equivalent to one of the months:—

"Then in comes March that noble arch,
With wholesome spring and air;
The child doth spring to years fifteen,
With visage fine and fair.
So do the flowers, with softening showers,
Ay spring up as we see;
Yet ne'ertheless, remember this—
That one day we must die."

April and May are prettily described: the succeeding month still better:—

"Then brave April doth sweetly smile,
The flow'rs do fair appear,
The child is then become a man
To the age of twenty year.
If he be kind and well inclin'd
And brought up at the school.
Then men may know if he foreshow
A wise man or a fool.

"Then cometh May gallant and gay
When fragrant flow'rs do thrive,
The child is then become a man
Of age twenty and five:
And for his life doth seek a wife
His life and years to spend,
Christ from above sent peace and love
And grace unto the end.

"Then cometh June with pleasant tune,
When fields with flowers are clad,
And Phœbus bright is at his height—
All creatures then are glad;
Then he appears of thretty years,
With courage bold and stout;
His nature so makes him to go,
Of death he hath no doubt."

There are other and even closer resemblances between this antique strain and the "Man was made to mourn;" but all must concur in the opinion of Lockhart, that "whatever might be the casual idea that set the Poet to work, it is evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom."

TO RUIN.

I.

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Though thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou grim pow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's prayer!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!

When shall my soul, in silent peace,
  Resign life's joyless day ;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
  Cold mould'ring in the clay ?
    No fear more, no tear more,
      To stain my lifeless face ;
    Enclasped, and grasped
      Within thy cold embrace !

Burns seems to have glanced into futurity with a prophetic eye : images of misery and woe darkened the distant vista : and when he looked back on his career he saw little to console him.—" I have been, this morning," he observes, " taking a peep through, as Young finely says, ' The dark postern of time long elapsed.' 'Twas a rueful prospect ! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly ! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportion, in some parts ! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others ! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies and said :— ' Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' I rose, eased and strengthened." The present fragment seems to have been composed when his farming speculations failed—one on whom he had set his heart had deserted him—and " Hungry Ruin had him in the wind."

TO

JOHN GOUDIE OF KILMARNOCK,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS.

O Goudie! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and rev'rend wigs,
Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girnin', looks back,
Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin', glowrin' Superstition,
Waes me! she's in a sad condition;
Fie! bring Black Jock, her state physician,
To see her w-t-r.
Alas! there's ground o' great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
But now she's got an unco ripple;
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death;
See, how she fetches at the thrapple,
An' gasps for breath.

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
Gaen in a galloping consumption,
Not a' the quacks, wi' a' their gumption,
Will ever mend her.
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
Death soon will end her.

'Tis you and Taylor * are the chief,
Wha are to blame for this mischief,
But gin the Lord's ain focks gat leave,
A toom tar-barrel,
An' twa red peats wad send relief,
An' end the quarrel.

The Essays of John Goudie are all but forgotten; not so the burning commentary of the Bard. To the English admirers of Burns it is perhaps necessary to say that the "Whigs," of whom the Essayist was the terror, were the Old Light portion of the Presbyterian kirk; men, ceremonious in their observances, austere in their conversation, and who accounted themselves Calvinists to the letter.—"These people inculcate," says a reverend biographer, "that the greatest sinner is the greatest favourite of heaven—that a reformed bawd is more acceptable to the Almighty than a pure virgin who has hardly ever transgressed, even in thought—that the lost sheep alone will be saved, and that the ninety-and-nine out of

* Dr. Taylor, of Norwich.

the hundred will be left in the wilderness to perish without mercy—that the Saviour of the world loves the elect, not from any lovely qualities which they possess, for they are hateful in his sight—but 'he loves them, because he loves them.' Such are the sentiments which are breathed by those who are denominated high Calvinists, and from which the soul of a poet who loves mankind, and who has not studied the system in all its bearings, recoils with horror." Burns—against whom a hue and cry of heresy was raised—has said nothing so ferocious as this "bold commentator." The picture which he has painted is as unjust as it is indecorous.

Death has been dealing—to use the language of the old bard—with all the clergymen of the west whom the poet lampooned or praised, save one, and that one is MacKinlay, one of the characters in the "Ordination." He is a good and venerable man: was the friend of Auld, minister of Mauchline, and it was his practice, when he called at his reverend brother's house, to shake hands, kneel down and unite in asking a blessing from above on their ministry, and on the flocks committed to their charge. There is something apostolical or primitive in this.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1*st*, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' paitricks scraichin' loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On fasten-een we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle fun an' jokin',
Ye need na doubt ;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife :
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I. "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't,
Then a' that ken't him round declar'd
He had ingine,
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude an' rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel',
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're may be wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better taen up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then though I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,
If I could get it!

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true—
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel;
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends an' folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
May be some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship should give place
To catch-the-plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

John Lapraik, to whom this and two other epistles were addressed, lived on his own ground at Dalfram, near Muirkirk, [illegible] a rustic follower of the muses. In an [illegible] hour, when the love of making "meikle mair" came upon him, he purchased shares in what Burns called "[illegible] bubble, the Ayr Bank," and was involved in [illegible]. The song which moved the Poet to write to

him was composed, he said, in one of his days of despondency, when his wife refused to be comforted. Misfortune became his muse and inspired him.—the first verse is very beautiful.

> "When I upon thy bosom lean,
> And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
> I glory in the sacred ties
> That made us ane wha ance were twain,
> A mutual flame inspires us baith,
> The tender look, the melting kiss,
> Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,
> But only gie us change of bliss.

"The Epistle to J. Lapraik," says Gilbert Burns, "was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. Rocking is a term derived from primitive times, when our countrywomen employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house—hence the phrase of going a rocking, or with the rock. As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women." Formerly, in the lowlands of Scotland, wool was carded and spun for the benefit of the family to whom these friendly visitations were made. In some inland villages the social custom still prevails.

TO THE SAME.

April 21*st*, 1785

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor,
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, wi' weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours' bite,
My awkart muse sair pleads and begs,
I would na write.

The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, " Ye ken, we've been sae busy
This month an' mair,
That trouth, my head is grown right dizzie,
An' something sair."

Her dowff excuses pat me mad:
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
An' thank him kindly?"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
An' down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An' if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland-harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waft an' warp;
She's but a b-tch.

She's gien me monie a jirt an' fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the L—d, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the sax an' twentieth simmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame
In some bit brugh to represent
A bailie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal Thane,
Wi' ruffl'd [illegible] an' glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain' o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n, that 's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
An' none but he!"

O mandate, glorious and divine!
The followers o' the ragged [illegible]e,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless nievfu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, an' joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year!

The reply of Lapraik has been recorded; it was in its nature pleasing, and drew from the Bard of Mossgiel this second epistle, in which he says much of his toils and his musings. I have heard one of our greatest English poets recite, with commendations, most of the stanzas, pointing out as he went the all but inimitable ease and happiness of thought and language. He re-

marked, however, that Burns was either fond of out-of-the-way sort of words, or that he made them occasionally in his fits of feeling and fancy.—" For instance, he calls his muse

'The tapetless ramfeezled hizzie,'

and complains of being himself—

'Forjesket sair, wi' weary legs.'

Now, I sorely suspect, that though 'forjesket' may pass, both 'tapetless' and 'ramfeezled' are new comers in to your dialect." To my friend I replied, that tapetless indicated want of strength; that forjesket was a word in common use, and meant worn-out with labour; and, with respect to ramfeezled, I could only quote the words of Cowper.—" Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbour of mine; but his uncouth dialect spoiled all; and, before he had read him through, he was quite *ramfeezled*." This was written in August, 1787.

TO

WILLIAM SIMPSON,

OCHILTREE.

May, 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie ;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie ;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie ;
Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame ;
Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye Enbrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whiles they're like to be my deed
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd stile;
She lay like some unken'd-of isle
Beside New-Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon ;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
Nae body sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line !
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae southron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood !
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,
Or glorious dy'd.

O sweet are Coila's haugh's an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray:
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The muse, nae Poet ever fand her,
'Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch an' strive,
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal;
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies;
While terra firma, on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In ROBERT BURNS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean,
By this New Light,*
'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans,
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, 'till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewing,
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain—undisputed ;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
'Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang ;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk ;
For 'twas the auld moon turned a neuk,
An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin', to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirmed ;
The herds an' hissels were alarmed ;
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks ;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt ;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' Auld Light caddies bure sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
'Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But New Light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an'-stowe,
Till now amaist on every knowe,
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some their New-Light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the Auld Light flocks are bleatin';
Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin';
Mysel', I've even seen them greetin'
Wi' girnin' spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the loons!
Some Auld Light herds in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
An' stay ae month amang the moons
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
An' when the New Light billies see them
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But tho' dull prose-folk latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

William Simpson was, in the days of Burns, and is still, schoolmaster of the parish of Ochiltree; he has performed carefully the duties of his station, and lives respected by his scholars, some of whom are to be found in the east as well as in the west. Burns seems to have been partial to this class of men. He corresponded with David Sillar; he wrote anxiously to John Murdoch; William Nicol was long his companion, as well as correspondent; to Allan Masterton he was partial: he was intimate with the warm-hearted and enthusiastic James Gray. The present epistle shews what he thought of William Simpson; indeed, with all he was social and friendly who had any claim to education or information, save the unfortunate Dr. Hornbook. The natural modesty of the Poet is as visible in this epistle as it is elsewhere: as

a rhymer, he aspires not to rank with Allan Ramsay, or Hamilton of Gilbertfield—

> "Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
> A deathless name."

But he desires to sing of the hills and dales, and heroes and beauties of Kyle in his own rude country tongue. As Simpson is "a rhyme-composing brither," Burns speaks to him about his own aspirations; and, as he is a candidate for a kirk, he adds a postscript—a rather mystical one—on the heresy of the New Light.

It is likely that honest "John Ochiltree" of the old song took his name from Simpson's parish: and it is more than likely that the inimitable Edie Ochiltree of Scott's romance was baptized after the hero of the song: elsewhere, and in the strains of Burns, the name occurs.

> "The night it was a haly night,
> The day had been a haly day:
> Kilmarnock gleam'd wi' caunle light,
> As hameward Girzie took her way.
> A man o' sin, black be his fa'!
> May he ne'er haly matin see—
> Met gracious Girzie, wal-awa!
> Amang the hills of Ochiltree."

TO J. LAPRAIK.

Sept. 13*th*, 1785.

Guid speed an' furder to you Johnny,
Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bonny;
Now when ye're nickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' haggs
Like drivin' wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, an' skelpin' at it,
But bitter, daudin' showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jocteleg an' whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel' ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sel's ;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browster wives an' whiskey stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship Sir, I winna quat it,
An' if ye mak' objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we'll knot it,
An' witness take,
An' when wi' Usquabae we've wat it
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
An' theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blythe an' witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
An' be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are cowpet wi' the blast,
An' now the sinn keeks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
An' quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe myself in haste
Your's, Rab the Ranter.

This third and last epistle of Burns to Lapraik was omitted in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, and might have been lost had not the Bard of Muirkirk, cheered by the success of his brother of Mossgiel, given his poetic works to the world, and printed the hasty effort of his friend by way of illustration. In looking over the volume of Lapraik, good sense, good feeling, and knowledge of men and manners will be found; but he wants warmth and energy. He sings a cold and lifeless strain, and has a knack of rhyme, and little else. The fame which Burns obtained deluged the lowlands of Scotland with rustic verse; and I have heard men, who had the reputation of good sense, express surprise at their want of success, They did not observe that those homely bards wanted almost all for which Burns was distinguished. The muse with him was all life, bloom,

and beauty, and had humour at will, and ready wit, and pathetic sentiment, and was, moreover, a leaper and a dancer. The muse of the competitors resembled a corse rather than a living thing; bloom and beauty had never belonged to her, and if she exhibited any symptoms of animation they were convulsive starts, such as galvanism excites in a dead body.—"He carries us," says Campbell, speaking of Burns, "into the humble scenes of life: not to make us dole out our tribute of charitable compassion to paupers and cottagers, but to make us feel with them on equal terms: to make us enter into their passions and interests, and share our hearts with them, as with brothers and sisters of the human species."

The name of Rab the Ranter at the end of this poem seems adopted from Maggie Lauder:

"Maggie, quo' he, and by my bags,
I'm fidgin' fain to see thee;
Sit down by me, my bonny burd,
In troth I winna steer thee;
"For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is Rab the Ranter;
The lasses loup as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter."

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,

Sept. 17th, 1785.

While at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage rinnin' scow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple, countra bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse h-ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin' cantin' grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an hauf-mile graces,
Their raxin' conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces,
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gaun,* miska't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus't him.
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him.

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
But twenty times, I rather wou'd be—
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace an' truth,
For what?—to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin straight.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those,
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbytereal bound
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which gies you honour)
Even Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good Sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

It is, perhaps, enough to say of this epistle that the gentleman to whom it is addressed was a worthy minister in the west of Scotland, who believed and preached the New Light: and that it was written as an envelope to "Holy Willie's Prayer," of which it seems this reverend person had requested a copy. It fixes the limit, at least, of the religious controversy, and shows that the poet was weary of working in the cause of the children of the New Light.

"My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her."

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH,
NOVEMBER, 1785.

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion.
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
'Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

"The charm," says Jeffrey "of the fine lines, written on turning up a mouse's nest with the plough, will be found to consist in the simple tenderness of the delineation." It has higher beauties, viz. the poet's regret that man's power has broken the social union of nature, and induces a "fellow-mortal" to fly in terror from his face, and the pathetic reference to his own condition—he shrinks from the contemplation of the present, and he dreads the future. The field on the farm of Mossgiel is still pointed out and visited in which Burns composed this grand moral poem: he loved to muse at the plough, and when the day was fine he usually added a few verses to his works in hand, or imagined others. I have seen "the Mouse" sharply criticized for that very simplicity of delineation which Jeffrey observed in it, and the fine verse commencing with

'That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,'

quoted as a proof of weakness and want of vigour of expression. My eloquent friend Carlyle has spoken with feeling and understanding on this point. "A virtue as of mountain breezes, and of green fields, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life, and hardy natural man. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a

sweet native gracefulness: he is tender and he is vehement; yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. Observe with what a prompt and eager force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye—full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him."

"It required," remarks Wilson, "less magnanimity in one of the old Romans to lay aside the consular gown and return to the plough—for then such was the spirit of the whole nation—than in Burns, suddenly invested with the garb of glory, to withdraw from the gaze of admiration and wonder; and, as if genius had never tuned his heart-strings to poetry, nor inspiration touched his lips with fire, to take his place again on the corn-field among the reapers; or, in his own person, to realize the picture of the cotter, which years before he had drawn at his work, and which, when repeated by him in the silence of nature to his brother, had melted the strong man into tears."

SCOTCH DRINK.

> "Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
> That's sinking in despair;
> An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
> That's prest wi' grief an' care;
> There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
> Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
> Till he forgets his loves or debts,
> An' minds his griefs no more."
>
> SOLOMON'S PROVERB, XXXI. 6, 7.

LET other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' dru'ken Bacchus,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink;
Whether thro' wimplin' worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
An' aits set up their awnie horn,
An' pease an' beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boilin' flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin';
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin',
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy, siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a new-year morning
In cog or bicker,
An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz an' freath
I' th' lugget caup!
Then Burnewin comes on like death
At ev'ry chap.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
    The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
    Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin' weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin' cuifs their dearies slight;
    Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
    Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
    Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
    To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason
But monie daily weet their weason
    Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
    E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, druken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well,
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel,
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whiskey punch
Wi' honest men!

O whiskey! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's a—!

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, an' barkin' hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast,
Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whiskey stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whiskey gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak' a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.



Scotch drink is a favourite topic with the northern poets; three instances may be given of poems in its praise by our old minstrels. The earliest of these is good classical Scotch, and named "Allane-a-Maut." It begins thus:—

"Quhen he wes zung, and cled in grene,
Haifand his hair about his ene,
Baith men and women did him mene;
Quhen he grew on zon hillis hie,—
Quhy sowld not Allane honorit be?"

The second is in a homelier dialect, and is as well known in the north of England as in the south of Scotland;—it is also called "Allan-o-Maut."

> "Gude Allan-o Maut was ance ca'd bear,
> And he was cadged frae wa' to wear,
> And dragglet wi' muck and syne wi' rain,
> Till he dict and came to life again."

The name of the third is "John Barleycorn;" it is in the ballad style, and has, as will be shown, been successfully imitated by Burns. Fergusson, in his "Drink Eclogue," makes brandy and whiskey with little propriety—in an allegorical sense—hold conversation with an Edinburgh hostess:—

> "Twa chappin' bottles panged wi' liquor fu',
> Brandy the tane, the tither whiskey blue,
> Grew cankered, for the twa were het within,
> And het skinned fouk to flytin soon begin;
> The Frenchman fizzed and first wad foot the field,
> While paughty Scotsman scorned to beenge or yield."

Brandy assumes a lordly tone; speaks with scorn of the native cordial, and boasts how he chased hysterics from ladies, and cheered even priest in the closet instead of prayers. Whiskey, calmly and mildly—says he inspired poets with song, and made Allan Ramsay's chaunter

> "chirm fu' clear,
> Life to the soul and music to the ear."

Brandy appeals to the landlady, who settles the matter at once. The Excise, she observes, has hindered the importation of the right Cogniac, and that the spirit in the bottle, which gives itself such aristocratic airs, is

> "Whiskey, tinctured with the saffron's dye."

"I here enclose you," says Burns, on the 20th of March, 1786, to one of his correspondents, "my 'Scotch Drink.' I hope, some time before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us, in a mutchkin stoup."

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"Dearest of distillation! last and best!——
——How art thou lost!——"

PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your honour's heart wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin' on her a—
Low i' the dust,
An' scriechin' out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aquavitæ ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier youth,
The honest, open, naked truth :
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble :
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble !

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom ?
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb !
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em :
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin votes you were na slack ;
Now stand as tightly by your tack ;
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw ;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle;
An' d-mn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin' a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler, right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell.
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your honours, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them with a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran';
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;*
An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;†
An' ane, a chap that's d-mn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick an' Ilay;
An' Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
An' monie ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

---

* Sir Adam Ferguson.
† The Duke of Montrose.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost militia fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her whiskey.

An' L—d, if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' th' first she meets!

For G-d sake, sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
To get remead.*

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the cadie!
An' send him to his dicing box
An' sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's*
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach,
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue,
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

---

* A worthy old hostess of the author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studies politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch drink.

An' now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a minister grow dorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes,
That haunt St. Jamie's!
Your humble Poet sings an' prays
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
Tak aff their whiskey.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' powther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throwther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
In faint huzzas!

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me whiskey's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and whiskey gang thegither!—
Tak aff your dram!

"This poem was written," says Burns, "before the act anent the Scotch Distilleries of Session 1786, for which Scotland and the author return their most grateful thanks." After the verse commencing—

"Erskine, a spunkie Norlan billie

there appears in Burns' book of manuscripts a verse which has occasioned some conjecture concerning the cause of its omission

"Thee, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
If bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that yere sword were wanted,
Ye'd lend your hand;
But when there's aught to say anent it,
Ye're at a stand."

Perhaps the Poet reflected that the future Earl of Eglinton might dislike to be described as sharp of sword and slack of speech.—"Why this was left out in printing," says Gilbert Burns, "does not appear. The noble earl will not be sorry to see this notice of him, familiar though it be, by a bard whose genius he admired, and whose fate he lamented." The persons mentioned in the poem are "common and popular." The "crankous mood" of old Scotland respecting her lost militia is well and truly described: had the poet lived till 1798, he would have seen her in an equally crankous mood on obtaining her militia: riots took place in several parts of the country:

houses were attacked, and the lives of the schoolmasters threatened, on whom government unwisely laid the duty of making out the list of persons eligible to serve. Two hundred rustics, with guns and pitchforks, marched against the house of Sir Robert Grierson: a detachment of volunteers hastened from Dumfries for its protection; nor did the besiegers disperse till one of the volunteers in a parley showed them four-and-twenty round of ball-cartridge, and made one of them feel the balls with his fingers. On this one of the rustic leaders exclaimed, "G—d, lads, this is gaun to be serious," and dispersed his men.

The sentiments of David Sillar on whiskey will show how much he differed in opinion, as well as in poetic power, with his brother bard :—

"It taks the best bits o' the fiel;
It robs our markets o' gude meal;
It aft times maks the simple chiel
Baith fa' an' swagger,
An' turns him aft a ne'er-do-weel
Or randy beggar.

"I've seen, an' aft my heart's been wae,
Unthinkin' mortals led astray :
By whiskey made a certain prey,
First to dejection,
Then led by bards the beaten way
To their destruction.

"O' a' ye lords wha rule the nation,
An' commoners o' every station,
Ye'll send the kintra to damnation,
An' that ye'll see
Whene'er ye grant the distillation
O' curst whiskie."

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID,

OR THE

RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.



My son, these maxims make a rule,
  And lump them ay thegither ;
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
  The Rigid Wise anither ;
The cleanest corn that e'er was di[illegible]
  May hae some pyles o' caff in ;
So ne'er a fellow creature slight
  For random fits o' daffin
SOLOMON —Eccles. ch. vii. ver 16

I.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
  Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
  Your neebours' fauts and folly !
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
  Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heaped happer's ebbing still,
  And still the clap plays clatter.

II.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals ;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

IV.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop :
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye send your sea-way ;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

V.

See social life and glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
'Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and drinking :
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences ;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
D-mnation of expences !

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases ;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper, i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

VII.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman ;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human :
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it :
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

VI.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
   Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
   Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
   We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
   But know not what's resisted.

The germ of this Address to the Rigidly Righteous is to be found in the early prose memoranda of the poet.—"Let any one," he says, "of the strictest character for regularity of conduct amongst us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say that any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes of mankind around him, with a brother's eye." Who the high exalted virtuous dames and holy Willie's were, to whom the poem was addressed, has not been told us. Perhaps they belonged to the chosen-swatch—with screwed-up, grace-proud faces—seen by the Bard, when, with Fun at his elbow, he visited the Holy Fair.

"It is the privilege of poetic genius," says Wordsworth, "to catch, under certain restrictions—of which, perhaps, at the time of its being exerted, it is but dimly conscious—a spirit of pleasure, wherever it can be found, in the walks of nature, and in the business of

men. The Poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates amid the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war: nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love, though immoderate—from convivial pleasure, though intemperate—nor from the presence of war, though savage, and recognized as the handmaid of destruction. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature, both with reference to himself and in describing the condition of others."

To unmask hypocrisy was a favourite pursuit of the muse of Burns, and it must be owned she was sometimes successful. Not content with exposing others, the Poet bared his own bosom and displayed his errors to the world with a confidence which has been ill-requited. His confessions of frailty have supplied texts to preach from against the follies of poets—men of whom one, who had a right to speak, has said,—

> "In naked feeling and in aching pride,
> They bear the unbroken blast on every side."

This has been pushed so far in the story of Burns, that a clergyman intimated from the pulpit that heaven, at the Poet's funeral, manifested its wrath in "thunder, lightning, and in rain." Instead of this, however, July sent one of her brightest and balmiest days.

TAM SAMSON'S* ELEGY.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God.'
POPE.

HAS auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great M'Kinlay† thrawn his heel!
Or Robinson‡ again grown weel,
To preach an' read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
Tam Samson's dead.

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sob, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane,
Tam Samson's dead!

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.

† A preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* the Ordination, stanza II.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him also see the Ordination, stanza IX.

The brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the lodge an unco devel,
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the lochs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock,
Tam Samson's dead?

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need;
But now he lags on death's hog-score,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts be-dropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel ken'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crousely craw;
Ye maukins cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa',
Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd
Saw him in shootin' graith adorn'd
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, Och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns cam' down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin', clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre many a weary hag he limpit,
An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
"Lord, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger;
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch an' breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave
O' pouther an' lead,
'Till Echo answer frae her cave
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me;
He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man want we:
Tam Samson's dead!

EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie,*
Tell ev'ry social, honest billie
To cease his grievin',
For yet, unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin'.

"When this worthy old sportsman," says the Poet, in a note, "went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase 'the last of his fields,' and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the

* Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for Kilmarnock.

muirs. On this hint the Author composed his elegy and epitaph." No poet ever emblazoned fact with fiction more happily than Burns: the hero of this poem was a country sportsman, who loved curling on the ice in winter, and shooting on the moors in the season. When no longer able to

> "Guard or draw a wick or bore,
> Or up the rink like Jehu roar
> In time of need;"

or march over hill and hagg in quest of

> "Paitricks, teals, moor-pouts, and plivers,"

he loved to lie on the lang-settle, and listen to the deeds of others on field and flood; and when a good tale was told, he would cry "Hech man! three at a shot; that was famous!" Some one informed Tam that Burns had written a poem—"a gay queer ane"—concerning him: he sent for the Bard, and in something like wrath, requested to hear it: he smiled grimly at the relation of his exploits, and then cried out, "I'm no dead yet, Robin—I'm worth ten dead fowk: wherefore should ye say that I am dead?" Burns took the hint, retired to the window for a minute's space or so, and coming back, recited the Per Contra, "Go, fame, an' canter like a filly." Tam was so delighted that he rose unconsciously, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed, "That'll do—ha! ha!—that'll do!" The poetic epitaph is inscribed on his gravestone in the churchyard of Kilmarnock; he survived the writing of the elegy and—the hand that wrote it.

SECOND EPISTLE

TO

DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

AULD NIBOR,

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrent, frien'ly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair,
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld, gray hairs.

But DAVIE, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
Until ye fyke;
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faiket,
Be hain't wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
An' whyles, but ay owre late, I think
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the Bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-haet, that I sud ban,
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin',
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
An' while ought's there,
Then hiltie skiltie, we gae scrievin',
An' fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even tho' limpin' wi' the spavie
Frae door tae door.

David Sillar prefixed this Epistle to his poems, published at Kilmarnock, in the year 1789. He was, for some time, the chosen companion of Burns, and seems to have confided much to him in matters of love-making. David was acquainted with the nursery maid of Stair, Margaret Orr by name, and it is to this young woman that Burns alludes, when he says, in his first Epistle,

> "Ye have your Meg, your dearest part,
> And I my darling Jean."

The bard of Mossgiel accompanied his friend on one of those visits, and, as some of the lasses sung well, he gave them one or two of his songs. Mrs. Stewart happened, by chance, to see one of these compositions, and was so much struck with its grace and tenderness, that she desired to be told when the Author visited Stair again. It was in this way that his acquaintance with that accomplished lady began: and many years afterwards the Poet told Miss Stewart that, when requested to walk into the drawing-room, to be introduced to her mother, he suffered more than he would like to suffer again,—"Indeed," he said, "I endured such palpitation of heart as I never after experienced among

> 'Lords and ladies of high degree,'"

This introduction is supposed to have taken place in 1784; and if this date be correct, Mrs. Stewart must be,

hereafter, regarded as one of the first in Ayrshire, above the Poet's rank in life, who perceived his genius and treated him with respect.

Of the merits of "Dainty Davie," as a poet, the reader may judge from a few of the verses of his epistle to Burns :—

"I ne'er was muckle gi'en to praisin',
Or else ye might be sure o' fraisin',
For trouth, I think, in solid reason,
Your kintra reed
Plays sweet as Robin Fergusson,
Or his on Tweed.

"But tho' the tout o' fame may please you,
Let na the flatt'rin' ghaist o'erheeze you,
Ni'er flyte nor fraise to gar fock roose you;
For men o' skill,
When ye write weel, will always praise you
Out o' gude will.

"Great numbers on this earthly ba'
As soon as death gies them the ca',
Permitted are to slide awa',
An' straught forgot.
Forbid that this should ever fa'
To be your lot.

"I ever had an anxious wish,
Forgive me, Heav'n! if 'twas amiss,
That fame in life my name would bliss,
An' kindly save
It from the cruel tyrant's crush
Beyond the grave."

LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE

OF A

FRIEND'S AMOUR.

"Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself!
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe."
HOME.

I.

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy power, remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Pow'rs above;
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and her's alone!
And must I think it!—is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes never, never to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

The history of this touching poem has been related by several writers: Burns himself says to Dr. Moore, "This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of my farm to my brother—in truth, it was only nominally mine—and made what little preparation was in my power for

Jamaica. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for—

'Hungry ruin had me in the wind.'

I had for some days been skulking from covert to covert under all the terrors of a jail: as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels."

On the same subject Burns thus writes to John Richmond, then in Edinburgh, on the 30th of July, 1786:—"My hour is now come: you and I will never meet in Britain more: I have orders within three weeks at farthest to repair on board the Nancy, Captain Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica, and to call at Antigua. This, except to our friend James Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchline. Would you believe it: a warrant has been got to throw me into jail till I find security in an enormous sum! This they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of, and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the gospel, 'have no where to lay my head.' I know you will pour an execration upon her head; but spare the poor ill-advised girl for my sake." It is next to needless to add, that all this alludes to the situation in which the Poet was then placed with Jean Armour: the friend, for the sad issue of whose "Amour" he lamented, was himself: and the pangs which he describes with such feeling were suffered by his own heart. He seems to have blamed Mrs. Armour most: and, certainly, in a letter now before me, has "spared no arrows."

DESPONDENCY,

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
  I set me down and sigh :
O life ! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
  To wretches such as I !
Dim-backward as I cast my view,
  What sick'ning scenes appear !
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
  Too justly I may fear !
    Still caring, despairing,
      Must be my bitter doom ;
    My woes here shall close ne'er
      But with the closing tomb !

II.

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night
And joyless morn the same;
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

III.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream;

While praising, and raising
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

IV.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art:
But, ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here, must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

V.

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!

Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age!

It would form perhaps one of the most amusing, if not the most instructive chapter in poetic history, to compare the various opinions expressed by the inspired respecting happiness. He who dwells in a lonely valley believes happiness resides in the crowded city, among company and books; while he who sings amid the rattle of other men's chariot-wheels, and the smoke of ten thousand chimnies, fixes the abode of happiness by the side of some purling brook,—beside a green hill, where the wind is ever fragrant, and the voice of nature alone is heard. The high-born bard, sick of the hollow courtesies of polished society, sighs for pastoral solitudes, where flowers never fade, and flocks never stray, and beauty is never out of blossom: the shepherd bard, on the other hand, who has to wander over moors and mountains, half-choked in winter with drifting snow, and half-scorched in summer with burning suns,—who has to smear and clip his flocks, as well as keep them from the fox, and save them, too, from smothering in a snow-wreath, envies the opulent, and longs to be a lord. There was some sense in the remark of the Scotchman, who, in reading the saying of Solomon,—" Snow is beautiful in its season," exclaimed, " Aye, nae doubt it was beautiful to you sitting with rich wines and the

lasses o' Jerusalem aside you: but had ye been a poor stane-mason ye would hae said no such thing."

It is plain that Burns did not find happiness on the furrowed field; or in galloping three hundred miles a-week over ten parishes as a gauger: he looks back on the enviable days of his boyhood, and thinks them ill exchanged for the riper times and full-blown follies of manhood. In this he agrees with Gray, who exclaims, in his "Distant prospect of Eton College:"

> "Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
> Ah fields beloved in vain,
> Where once my careless childhood strayed
> A stranger yet to pain.
> I feel the gales that from ye blow
> A momentary bliss bestow,
> As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
> My weary soul they seem to sooth,
> And redolent of joy and youth,
> To breathe a second spring."

"I think," observes Burns, "it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, and loves an embodied form in verse; which to me is ever immediate ease." Fuseli, the painter, seeing his wife in a passion one day, said, "Swear, my love, swear heartily; you know not how much it will ease you."

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor."
GRAY.

I.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end:
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

II.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh ;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh :
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher thro'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

IV.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun' :
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town :

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the unco's that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years:
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;—
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn, and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain, that sought the Lord
aright!"

VII.

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures!—bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—

"If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

X.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food:
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride ;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care ;
And 'Let us worship God !' he says, with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name ;
Or noble Elgin beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickl'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;

Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How HE, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

XVI.

Then kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'*
That thus they all shall meet in future days:

* Pope's Windsor Forest.

There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion s pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

XIX.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

XXI.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart:
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,

(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

When Burns was first invited to dine at Dunlop-house, a westlan dame, who acted as housekeeper, appeared to doubt the propriety of her mistress entertaining a mere ploughman who made rhymes, as if he were a gentleman of old descent. By way of convincing Mrs. M'Guistan, for that was her name, of the bard's right to such distinction, Mrs. Dunlop gave her "The Cotter's Saturday Night" to read. This was soon done: she returned the volume with a strong shaking of the head, saying, "Nae doubt gentlemen and ladies think mickle o' this, but for me its naething but what I saw i' my father's house every day, and I dinna see how he could hae tauld it ony other way." The M'Guistans are a numerous clan; few of the peasantry personally acquainted with Burns were willing to allow that his merit exceeded their own.—"Indeed, sir," said one of those worthies, Hugh Cowan by name, to an inquiring admirer, "Robert Burns, save in clinking words, was just an ordinary man. I taught him the use o' the cudgel, and should ken what he had in him, I think."

Of the origin of this poem, Gilbert Burns gives a clear account.—"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the Author, the world is indebted for 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' When

Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons—those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community—and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the Author repeat 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul." The household of the virtuous William Burness was the scene of the poem, and William himself was the saint, and father, and husband of this truly sacred drama. Of this there can be no doubt; though I have heard it averred by gentlemen from the neighbourhood of Mauchline that George Wilson, cotter on the farm of Lochlea, a pious and worthy man, sat for the portrait. It is a better authenticated fact that Burns had Fergusson's "Farmer's Ingle" in his mind when he composed it. Both poems give an image of the household of a husbandman: the elder-born bard says—

> "Weel kens the gudewife that the pleughs require
> A heartsome meltith, and refreshin' synd
> O' nappy liqour, owre a bleezin fire;
> Sair wark and poortith downa weel be joined,
> Wi' buttered bannocks now the girdle reeks;
> I' the far nook the bowie briskly reams;
> The readied kail stands by the chimley cheeks,
> And haud the riggin het wi' welcome streams
> Whilk than the daintiest kitchen nicer seems."

He continues the rustic picture, and exhibits the inmates in conversation—

> The couthy cracks begin when supper's owre;
> The cheering bicker gars them glibly gash
> O' simmer's showery blinks and winter sour,
> Whase floods did erst their mailens produce hash.

> 'Bout kirk and market eke their tales go on,
> How Jock woo'd Jenny here to be his bride;
> And there, how Marion, for a bastard son,
> Upo' the cutty stool was forced to ride,
> The waefu' scauld o' our mess John to bide."

The housewife lectures her maidens on thrift, and the farmer is not unemployed:—

> "Frae him the lads their morning counsel tak;
> What stacks he wants to thrash; what rigs to till;
> How big a birn may be on Bassie's back,
> For meal and multure to the thirlen mill.
> Neist the gudewife her hireling damsels bids
> Glowr through the byre and see the hawkies bound,
> Tak tent 'case crummy tak her wonted tids,
> And ca' the leglins treasure on the ground,
> Whilk spills a kebbuck nice or yellow pound."

It is to be lamented that the pictures of Fergusson and Burns are not to be explained by reference to the general practice of these our later days: the farmer no longer presides among his menials like a father with his children, and the sound of psalm and prayer is now seldom heard among the farm onsteads and cottages. Washington Irving, perceived a similar falling off in the south—he is speaking of family prayers.—"It was once almost universally the case at the seats of the nobility and gentry of England, and it is much to be regretted that the custom is fallen into neglect; for the dullest observer must be sensible of the order and serenity prevalent in those households where the occasional exercise of a beautiful form of worship in the morning gives, as it were, the key-note to every temper for the day, and attunes every spirit to harmony."

THE FIRST PSALM.

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his GOD.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossoms buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that GOD the good adore
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

I am not one of those who think Burns so happy in his sacred as in his ordinary poetry. Any one who compares his "First Psalm" with the common version of Scotland will feel that in simplicity the sacred minstrel of the days of the Stuarts surpasses the Poet of Kyle. The latter is cold and tame in comparison. The verse describing the good man and the wicked man dwells on many northern memories:—

"He shall be like a tree that grows
Near planted by a river,
Which in his season yields his fruit,
And his leaf fadeth never:
And all he doth shall prosper well;
The wicked are not so,
But like they are unto the chaff
Which wind drives to an fro."

A new version of the Psalms has long been talked of in Scotland; but the General Assembly must proceed warily in the matter. Some of the Psalms are exquisite compositions. I shall instance but the eighth psalm: with a slight blemish in one or two lines, it is perfect:—it is Thomson's Seasons in little. The want of elegance which I have heard complained of is but a poor reason for throwing into oblivion a vast body of verse which abounds with such simplicity of language, such sincerity of expression, and wears such an old world air, as no living bards with all their harmony and polish can equal. Besides, they carry upon them the stamp of pure days and holy hands, and have the advantage of being venerable.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES

OF THE

NINETIETH PSALM.

O Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself
Arose at Thy command;

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night, cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

The ninetieth psalm—the Scottish version—is said to have been a favourite in the household of William Burness. Though not so happily versified as others of the sacred lyrics, it contains beautiful verses, and touches, with no little feeling, on the life and age of man —

"Our sins thou and iniquities
Dost in thy presence place,
And set st our secret faults before
The brightness of thy face,
For in thine anger all our days
Do pass on to an end,
And, as a tale that hath been told,
So we our years do spend

"Three score and ten years do sum up
Our days and years, we see:
Or if, by reason of more strength,
In some fourscore they be,



> Yet doth the strength of such old men
> But grief and labour prove;
> For it is soon cut off, and we
> Fly hence and soon remove."

To devotional verse the mind of Burns was directed early: the reading of the Bible at school was sufficient for this; but there were other impulses.—"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in," he writes to Dr. Moore, "was the Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning

> 'How are thy servants blest O Lord!'

I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear:—

> "For though on dreadful whirls we hung,
> High on the broken wave."

I met with these lines in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books."

It is related in our Scottish legends that a wayfaring Irishman took shelter, one stormy night, in a farmer's house, just as the household struck up the ninetieth psalm, some say the hundred and nineteenth—in family worship. The stranger, ignorant of the devotional turn of his host, imagined the psalm to be a song in honour of his coming—in short, a welcome. He sat and heard it to an end, and then said, "Merry be your heart, goodman: that's a long song, and a good song; and, by way of requital, I shall give you a touch of Brian O'Linn."

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786.

WEE, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet,
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
'Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
'Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom.

The "Mountain Daisy" was composed, as the Poet has related, at the plough: the field where he crushed the "Wee modest crimson-tipped flower" lies next to that in which he turned up the nest of the Mouse, and both are on the farm of Mossgiel, and still shown to anxious inquirers by the neighbouring peasantry.—"Mossgiel," says the accurate Chambers, "is about a mile from Mauchline. It is a very plain farm-steading of the kind described in Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd':—

'A snug thack house, before the door a green;
Hens on the midden, ducks in dubs are seen;
On this side stands a barn, on that a byre,
A peat-stack joins, and forms a rural square;'

except that the buildings are not thatched. Being situated at the height of the country, between the vales of the Ayr and the Irvine, it has a peculiarly bleak and ex-

posed appearance, which is but imperfectly obviated by a very tall hedge, and some well-grown trees which gather around it, and beneath one of which, it is said, the Poet loved to recline. The domestic accommodations consist of little more than a butt and a ben—that is, a kitchen and a small room. The latter, though in every respect most humble, and partly occupied by fixed beds, does not appear uncomfortable. Every consideration, however, in the mind of the visitor sinks beneath the one intense feeling that here—within these four walls—warmed at this little fire-place, and lighted by this little window—lived one of the most extraordinary men that ever breathed; and here wrote some of the most celebrated poems of modern times. The house is in every respect exactly in the same condition as when the Poet lived in it." Who could wish to add any thing to a description so touching and so true as this!

The second verse of the Daisy reminds me of a stanza of an old north country song, a favourite once with the peasantry, who loved it for its truth as well as beauty:—

"The lark in the morning
Arises from her nest,
And mounts to the air
With the dew on her breast;
And like my jovial ploughman
Sae merrily she'll sing,
And at gloaming return
To her nest back again."

EPISTLE

TO

A YOUNG FRIEND.

May, 1786.

I.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Though it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

II.

Ye'll try the world fu' soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

III.

I'll no say men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked;
But, och! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted!

IV.

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' important end of life,
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

V.

Ay free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

VI.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

VII.

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

VIII.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that ay be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.

The great Creator to revere
 Must sure become the creature ;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
 And ev'n the rigid feature :
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
 Be complaisance extended ;
An Atheist laugh 's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended !

X.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
 Religion may be blinded ;
Or if she gie a random sting,
 It may be little minded ;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
 A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
 Is sure a noble anchor !

XI.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth !
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting !
May prudence, fortitude, and truth
 Erect your brow undaunting !
In ploughman phrase, " God send you speed,"
 Still daily to grow wiser ;
And may you better reck the rede
 Than ever did th' adviser !

When Burns saw that "misfortune's cauld nor' west" was ready to burst upon him, and that labouring on his farm was not likely to avert it, he wooed the muse with redoubled ardour—perhaps from a feeling that the exertions of his genius, and not of his hands, would save him. During the latter half of the year 1785 and the spring and summer part of 1786, he produced a vast body of poems—one of them is "The Epistle to Andrew Aiken," son to Robert Aiken, writer, in Ayr, to whom "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is inscribed. A coldness seems to have arisen between Burns and Robert Aiken: the former imagined that his friend, in his capacity of lawyer, had made himself more busy than necessary in the affair of the marriage contract between him and Jean Armour. Be that as it may, the name of Aiken all at once disappears from the Poet's correspondence.

The Epistle seems to have been addressed to one every way worthy of such a strain: young Aiken entered into the service of his country, and rose to distinction and affluence. He obtained some notice, too, the other year, at the dinner celebrating the birth-day of the Ayrshire Ploughman, and that of the Ettrick Shepherd; nature having, it seems, out of a wondrous love for the 25th of January, produced both Poets on that day of the year—and produced them both in storms: the hail and the whirlwind were abroad when Burns was born; and Ettrick rose in flood as Ettrick never rose before, when Hogg appeared.

TO A LOUSE,

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET, AT CHURCH.

HA ! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie !
Your impudence protects you sairly :
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace ;
Tho' faith, I fear, ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt an' sinner,
How dare you set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady !
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle ;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations ;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rells, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
'Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as onie grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fie!
How daur ye do't?

O, Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin'!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

O wad some power the gifted gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n devotion!

Homelier subjects were sometimes chosen by the Muse of Burns than his more stately friends desired. "The Louse" is one of them. Some of his lady patronesses expostulated, and some of his critics frowned; it was all to no purpose:—"Forbidden he wadna be." and it is as well, perhaps, as it is. When once a man of genius begins to sacrifice his own judgement to the taste of others, who knows where he may halt. As soon as he ceases to "wear his ain belt his ain gait" he puts it on according to the example of the world, and is no longer an original. Almost all the themes on which Burns sung are of a humble kind: a Mouse, a Daisy, an Old Mare, a Haggis, and so on, all pertain to the clouted shoe. The moral which he draws is one the world is not out of need of: to see ourselves as others see us, would give our vanity a plucking;

"What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us
And ev'n devotion!"

That vanity creeps into devotion is not unknown to the world. A worthy in my native vale, who imagined himself not only powerful in prayer, but that he had a sort of divinity of look conferred upon him when he knelt, turned round to his wife in the midst of his fervour, and said, "Tibbie! how do I look when I

pray!" Another of our Nithsdale holy Willies, who commonly volunteered a prayer when a corpse was lifted at a burial, arrived too late on one occasion, and found his place supplied by a meek, mild man, whose calmness was mistaken for coldness. "Sit you down, sir," said the other, pushing him aside, "your word has no weight at all;" and holding up his hands, poured out a thundering prayer, which might have been heard a mile down the wind.

"We ought," Burns observes, "when we wish to be economists in happiness, to fix the standard of our own character, and when on full examination we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who seem to doubt or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices, or despise their judgment. This is not self-conceit, it is self-knowledge: the one is the over-weening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be what he wishes himself to be thought; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has strongly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard—this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay the very weakness and wickedness, of our fellow-creatures." The Poet's judgment was equal to his genius: he estimated himself right; and in almost all things saw himself as others saw him.

EPISTLE TO J. RANKINE,

INCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin'!
There's monie godly folks are thinkin',
Your dreams* an' tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks an' cants,
And in your wicked, druken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
An' fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
Spare 't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black!
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives 't aff their back.

---

* A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye 're skaithing,
It 's just the blue-gown badge an' claithing
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair;
Sae, when you hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang,* ye 'll sen 't wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
I 've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,
An' danc'd my fill!
I 'd better gaen an' sair't the king
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a paitrick to the grun',
A bonnie hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

* A song he had promised the author.

The poor wee thing was little hurt ;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't ;
But, deil-ma-care !
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld. us'd hands had taen a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot ;
I was suspected for the plot ;
I scorn'd to lie ;
So gat the whissle o' my groat,
An' pay 't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pouther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear !
The game shall pay o'er moor an' dale,
For this, niest year.

As soon 's the clockin-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—d, I'se hae sportin' by an' by,
For my gowd guinea :
Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
For't, in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame
Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a yellow George to claim,
An' thole their blethers!

It pits me ay as mad's a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

John Rankine, to whom this Epistle is addressed, lived at Adam-Hill, in Ayrshire, and merited the praise of "rough and ready-witted," which Burns bestowed. The "dream which was making a noise in the country side," may be related as an instance of his caustic humour. Lord K—— it is said, was in the practice of calling all his familiar acquaintances "brutes," and sometimes "damned brutes."—"Well, ye brute, how are ye, to-day, brute?" was his usual mode of salutation. Once, in company, his lordship having indulged in this rudeness more than his wont, turned to Rankine and exclaimed, "Brute, are ye dumb? have ye no queer, sly story to tell us?"—"I have nae story," said Rankine, "but last night I had an odd dream."—"Out with it, by all means," said the other.—"Aweel, ye see," said Rankine "I dreamed I was dead, and that for keeping other than good company on earth I was damned. When I knocked at hell-door, wha should

open it but the deil; he was in a rough humour, and said 'Wha may ye be, and what's your name?'—'My name,' quoth I, 'is John Rankine, and my dwelling-place was Adam-Hill.'—'Gae wa' wi',' quoth Satan, 'ye canna be here; ye're ane of Lord K——'s damned brutes—hell's fou o' them already!'" This sharp rebuke, it is said, polished for the future his lordship's speech.

The figurative conclusion of the Epistle will admit of some verses from the Poet's "Address to an illegitimate Child," by way of illustration.

"Thou's welcome, wean; mishanter fa' me,
If aught of thee or of thy mammy
Shall ever daunton me or awe me,
My sweet wee lady;
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Tit-ta or daddy.

"An' if thou be what I wad ha'e thee,
An' tak the counsel I sall gi'e thee,
A lovin' father I'll be to thee,
If thou be spar'd;
Thro' a' thy childish years I'll e'e thee,
An' think't weel war'd.

"Gude grant that thou may ay inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, and merit,
An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failin's;
'Twill please me mair to hear an' see it,
Than stocket mailens."

The "sweet wee lady" of these verses was "The sonsie, smirking dear-bought Bess" of another of the Poet's epistles. Bess grew up and became "a wife and eke a mother." Her death is thus announced in the Scots Magazine:—"December 8, 1817. Died, Elizabeth Burns, wife of Mr. John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, daughter of the celebrated Robert Burns, and the subject of some of his most beautiful lines." She is said to have resembled the Poet more than any other of his children.

ON A SCOTCH BARD,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,
An' owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar
In social key;
For now he's taen anither shore,
An' owre the sea!

The bonnie lasses weel may wiss him,
An' in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the sea!

O fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummle
Wha can do nought but fyke and fumble,
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as onie wumble,
That's owre the sea!

Auld, cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;
'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee;
He was her laureat monie a year,
That's owre the sea!

He saw misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So row't his hurdies in a hammock,
An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in ;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding :
He dealt it free :
The muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel :
Ye'll find him ay a dainty chiel,
And fou o' glee ;
He wad na wrang'd the vera deil,
That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie.
Your native soil was right ill-willie ;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie !
I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
Tho' owre the sea !

In a copy of the Kilmarnock edition now before me, some one has so far mistaken the matter as to write that Burns composed this poem on the departure of John Gerron—a sorry rhymer—for the West Indies. Every word of it is about himself—his story is even dwelt on with a painful minuteness. It is true that poor Gerron

went abroad, wrote a poem on his own experiences, and went so far as to publish a volume of verse, which contained here and there a stroke of country wit, and exhibited a true domestic picture at the rate of two to a hundred pages. But he was a man ten years younger, perhaps, than Burns; and indeed it was the great success of the Ayrshire Ploughman which induced the Galwegian blacksmith to "lean o'er his anvil" and think of rhyme. I have heard Wordsworth praise the ready flow of verse in this poem, and recite with much emotion the eighth and ninth stanzas.

Burns in this poem, as well as in others, speaks freely of himself. An old man of the west of Scotland, who still lives to remember him with affection, says—"He was subject to great fluctuation of spirits—sometimes he was so depressed that he would shun his most intimate friends; and when observing any one he knew approaching him on the road, he hesitated not to leap over a hedge, or strike into another path, to avoid being disturbed." He was at such periods as likely to be in a poetic reverie as in a melancholy one.

THE FAREWELL.

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,
To those whose bless, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children! then, O then! he feels
The point of misery fest'ring in his heart,
And weakly w[illegible] his fortune like a coward
Such, such a[illegible] undone."

THOMSON'S EDWARD AND ELEANORA.

I.

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess! tho' thou'rt bereft
Of my parental care;
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith, my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
O then befriend my Jean!

II.

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
From thee, my Jeany, must I part!
  Thou weeping answ'rest no!
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace,
  I for thy sake must go!
Thee, Hamilton, and Aiken dear,
  A grateful, warm adieu!
I, with a much indebted tear,
  Shall still remember you!
    All-hail then, the gale then,
      Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
    It rustles, and whistles
      I'll never see thee more!

These very touching stanzas were composed when the prospects of the poet darkened, and he looked towards the West-Indies as a place of refuge, and perhaps of hope. "My Smith, my bosom frien'," is the same person to whom one of his best Epistles is addressed: and "Hamilton and Aiken dear" were at that period his chief advisers and patrons. The lines were first published in the Rev. Hamilton Paul's edition of the works of Burns—their authenticity is unquestionable.

A DEDICATION

TO

GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

Expect na, sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye're surnam'd like his grace;
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye,
Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin',
Its just sic poet, an' sic patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp him,
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The Patron, (sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me)
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain, he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it;
Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
'Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang:
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature,
Of our poor sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.

That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
Its no thro' terror of d-mn-tion ;
Its just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain !
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth and justice !

No—stretch a point to catch a plack ;
Abuse a brother to his back ;
Steal thro' a winnock frae a wh-re,
But point the rake that taks the door ;
Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane,
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving ;
No matter, stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang wry faces :
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own ;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin' !

Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets 'till heav'n commission gies him:
While o'er the harp pale Mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my dedication;
But when divinity comes cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to you:
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronize them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever——
I had amaist said, ever pray,
But that's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o't;
I'm baith dead sweer, an' wretched ill o't;

But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That kens or hears about you, Sir—

" May ne'er misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk !
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart !
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizen,
Are frae their nuptial labours risen :
Five bonnie lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows, stout an' able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel !
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days ;
'Till his wee curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow."

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
With complimentary effusion :
But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest with fortune's smiles and favours
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which pow'rs above prevent)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor!
But by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n!
While recollection's pow'r is given,
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
Should recognize my Master dear,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, Sir, your hand—my friend and brother.

One of the biographers of Burns charges him with asserting his independence of feeling in an arrogant manner in his "Dedication to Gavin Hamilton." On the same topic Jeffrey says, "The perpetual boast of his own independence is obtruded upon the readers of Burns in almost every page of his writings. The sentiment itself is noble, and is often finely expressed; but a gentleman would only have expressed it when he was insulted or provoked, and would never have made it a spontaneous theme to those friends in whose estimation he felt that his honour stood clear. It is mixed up, too, in Burns with a fierce tone of defiance, and indicates rather the pride of a sturdy peasant, than the calm and

natural elevation of a generous mind." The humble position of the Poet in society implied dependance: when Burns left the stubble-field, washed his toil-hardened hands, and sat down at a rich man's table, he could not but feel that, as a ploughman, he was out of his place, and dreaded naturally enough that his entertainers might think themselves wondrous condescending.

Gavin Hamilton was descended from the Hamiltons of Kype in Lanarkshire, and not at all related, as has been said, to the curate of Kirk-Oswald, who had a hand in bringing in "the Highland host" upon the Westlan Whigs in 1677. The true cause of the paltry, spiteful persecution of Hamilton by "Daddy Auld" is related at large in the Session books. the Presbytry of Ayr ordered the record to be expunged as frivolous; but one of the house of Hamilton desired that it might remain as an instance of the arrogance of the Kirk Session. One of the charges —the sternest one—has been put neatly into rhyme by Burns :—

> "He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
> And pricks the beast as if 'twere Monday."

"It is related," says Chambers, "of the laird of Kype, that he was once paying a visit to the Duke of Hamilton, when his grace inquired in what degree he was related to the ducal house, and whereabouts in the family tree the race of Kype was to be found. 'It would be needless to seek the root among the branches,' answered the haughty laird, who perhaps had some pretensions to be of the principal stock of the Hamiltons, or knew at least that the claims of the ducal house to the chiefship were by no means clear."

ELEGY

ON

THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him ;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,
Except the moment that they crush't him ;
For sune as chance or fate had hush't 'em
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lash't 'em
And thought it sport.

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man ;
But tell him, he was learned and clark,
Ye roos'd him than !

Cromek found this fragment among the papers of Burns, and printed it in the Reliques, with the intimation only that Ruisseaux was a play upon the Poet's own name. It is probably a portion of a poem in which he desired to dissect himself, and shew his evil and his good to the world; but not having commenced so happily as he wished, threw it aside, and resumed the subject in that noble and touching strain, "The Bard's Epitaph."—"He meets us in his compositions," says Campbell, "undisguised as a peasant; at the same time his observations go extensively into life, like those of a man who felt the proper dignity of human nature in the character of a peasant." Perhaps of all poets Burns poured most of himself into poetry. Byron appears in his verse as in a mask, and never comes fairly and unhesitatingly forward; of Scott, as he says of his namesake,

> "Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
> And some the waving of a gown."

Of Campbell personally we know nothing from his verse; nor has Southey shewn himself. Burns painted his own portrait, and did it so darkly, that others have presumptuously increased the gloom in their delineations of his character.

LETTER TO JAMES TAIT,

OF GLENCONNER.

'Auld comrade dear, and brither sinner,
How's a' the folk about Glenconner?
How do you this blae eastlin wind,
That's like to blaw a body blind?
For me, my faculties are frozen,
My dearest member nearly dozen'd.
I've sent you here, by Johnie Simson,
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;
Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
An' Reid, to common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought and wrangled,
An' meikle Greek an' Latin mangled,
Till wi' their logic-jargon tir'd,
An' in the depth of science mir'd,
To common sense they now appeal,
What wives and wabsters see and feel.
But, hark ye, friend! I charge you strictly,
Peruse them, an' return them quickly,
For now I'm grown sae cursed douce
I pray and ponder butt the house,
My shins, my lane, I there sit roastin',
Perusing Bunyan, Brown an' Boston;

Till by an' by, if I haud on,
I'll grunt a real gospel groan:
Already I begin to try it,
To cast my e'en up like a pyet,
When by the gun she tumbles o'er,
Flutt'ring an' gasping in her gore:
Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning an' a shining light.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
The ace an' wale of honest men:
When bending down wi' auld grey hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
An' views beyond the grave comfort him,
His worthy fam'ly, far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear!

My auld schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my mason Billie,
An' Auchenbay, I wish him joy;
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad, and Meg the mither,
Just five-and-forty years thegither!
An' no forgetting wabster Charlie,
I'm tauld he offers very fairly.
An' Lord, remember singing Sannock,
Wi' hale breeks, saxpence, an' a bannock,

An' next my auld acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy;
An' her kind stars hae airted till her
A good chiel wi' a pickle siller.
My kindest, best respects I sen' it,
To cousin Kate an' sister Janet;
Tell them, frae me, wi' chiels be cautious,
For, faith, they'll aiblins fin' them fashious;
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant a maidenhead's the devil.
An' lastly, Jamie, for yoursel,
May guardian angels tak a spell,
An' steer you seven miles south o' hell:
But first, before you see heaven's glory,
May ye get monie a merry story,
Monie a laugh, and monie a drink,
And aye eneugh o' needfu' clink.

Now fare ye weel, an' joy be wi' [illegible]ou,
For my sake this I beg it o' yo[illegible]
Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
Ye'll fin' him just an honest [illegible];
Sae I conclude, and quat m[illegible]er,
Your's, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANTER.

Tait, of Glenconner, accompanied Burns to Nithsdale in 1788, and advised him respecting the farm of Ellisland. —"I am just returned," says the Poet to a correspondent,

"from Millar's farm. My old friend, whom I took with me, was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent, sensible farmer in the county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans before me (farming and excise); I shall endeavour to balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. On the whole, if I find Mr. Millar in the same favourable disposition as when I saw him last, I shall, in all probability, turn farmer." To a correspondent of another complexion and character, Burns wrote, regarding "Old Glenconner," —"I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy, intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot: he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't trust this to any body in writing but you."

The poem is one of those hasty and every-day-business-like effusions which Burns occasionally penned. Though not at all equal to some of his earlier epistles, yet it is well worth preserving, as a proof of the ease with which he could wind verse round any topic, and conduct the duties and the courtesies of life in song. His account of ha[illegible] "[illegible]wn sae cursed douce," and scorching himself at the

Bunyan, Brown and Boston,"

is archly intr[illegible] The persons to whom a part of the letter allud[illegible] [illegible]f Glenconner's household or his neighbours. [illegible]anly tar" was probably Richard Brown.

ON THE

BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD

Sweet flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a pray'r,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to bl[illegible]
Protect thee frae the drivin[illegible]
The bitter frost and sna[illegible]

May He, the friend of woe and want
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer-morn :
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unsheltered and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand !
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land !

"These stanzas," says Burns in his memoranda, "were composed on the birth of a child in peculiar circumstances of family distress." A father was carried to the grave on the day his only daughter was born; a type of what happened at no distant date in the Poet's own household. Not only are the chief circumstances of the case applicable, but the very words which he used in expressing the woe of another, give an image of what was suffered in Burns'-street, in July, 1796. He speaks of the "mother-plant,"—

> "[illegible] late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
> Fair on the summer morn ;
> Now feebly bends she in the blast,
> [illegible]eltered and forlorn."

The shelteri[illegible] was removed in both cases, and tender flowe[illegible]ed to the storm. I shall never forget the ti[illegible] Burns's boys appeared in Dumfries streets [illegible]ourning for their father's death. All eyes were turned in sympathy on them—their weepers, as the white cambric on their coat-cuffs were called, and their forlorn and wondering looks, live in more memories than mine.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANKS,

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

Written on the blank leaf of a book, presented to her by the Author.

Beauteous rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,
Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' poisonous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem
Richly deck thy native stem:
Till some evening, sober, calm,
Dropping dews and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;

Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

Burns often intimated his friendships—or attachments, tenderer still—in verse or prose, on the blank leaf of a favourite book, and then presented the volume to the object of his regard. I have seen several of those precious presents. It has been remarked that he was most attached to ladies whose voices were sweet and harmonious, or who excelled in music. Of the spell which music threw over him, Professor Walker gives a very graphic account:—" About the end of October, I called for him at the house of a friend, whose daughter, though not more than twelve, was a considerable proficient in music. I found him seated by the harpsichord of this young lady, listening with the keenest interest to his own verses, which she sang and accompanied, and adjusting them to the music by repeated trials of the effect. In this occupation he was totally absorbed; and it was difficult to draw his attention from it for a moment; and it is to the enthusiasm which the nature of his undertaking inspired that the excellence of its execution must be ascribed. Had his ardour been less, I should probably have regretted to see his genius no longer left free to the impulse of inclination, and the excitement of interesting occurrences, but employed in amendment or imitation, and partly expended in overcoming the difficulties occasioned by an additional circumspection, both in subject and measure."

WILLIE CHALMERS.

I.

Wi' braw new branks in mickle pride,
  And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I'm got astride,
  And up Parnassus pechin;
Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush;
  The doited beastie stammers;
Then up he gets and off he sets
  For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

II.

I doubt na, lass, that weel kenn'd name
  May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame
  Nor his warm urged wishes.
Your bonnie face sae mild and sweet,
  His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye'll no be lost a whit,
  Tho' waired on Willie Chalmers.

III.

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye're fair,
   And honour safely back her,
And modesty assume your air,
   And ne'er a ane mistak' her:
And sic twa love inspiring e'en
   Might fire even holy Palmers;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
   To honest Willie Chalmers.

IV.

I doubt na fortune may you shore
   Some mim-mou'd pouthered priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
   And band upon his breastie:
But Oh! what signifies to you,
   His lexicons and grammars;
The feeling hearts' the royal blue,
   And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

V.

Some gapin', glowrin' countra laird,
   May warsle for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
   And host up some palaver.
My bonny maid, before ye wed
   Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
   Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

VI.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom,
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his dues,
For de'il a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.

The pen of the Poet was ever ready at the call of his friends. When a country squire fell in love, Burns supplied him with a song in praise of his mistress: when the minister of one parish doubted the scripture doctrine of the incumbent of another parish, he brought rhyme to his aid: nay, on this occasion he forgets the duty of poetic "black-sole," and absolutely courts a young lady for a friend, in very persuasive rhyme. This poetic curiosity was first given to the world by Lockhart in his life of the bard: he copied it from a small collection of MSS. sent by Burns to Lady Harriet Don, accompanied by the following explanation: "W. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his dulcinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows." William Chalmers was, in those days, a writer in Ayr, and a staunch comrade of the Poet: he was his correspondent also: but only one of the letters of Burns has survived the change which time and death make. I have not heard that the lady yielded to the influence of verse: women are seldom rhymed into wedlock.

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING

VERSES

IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

I.

O THOU dread Power, who reign'st above!
I know Thou wilt me hear,
When for this scene of peace and love
I make my prayer sincere.

II.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleased to spare;
To bless his filial little flock
And show what good men are.

III.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

IV.

Their hope—their stay—their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush—
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

V.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand—
Guide Thou their steps alway.

VI.

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May they rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A family in heaven!

Of the origin of these verses, Gilbert Burns gives the following account:—" The first time Robert heard the spinnet played upon was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minister of Loudon, now in Glasgow, having given up the parish in favour of his son. Dr. Lawrie has several daughters—one of them played; the father and the mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the Poet, and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family-scene for our Poet, then lately

introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept. It was to Dr. Lawrie that Dr. Blacklock's letter was addressed; which my brother, in his letter to Dr. Moore, mentions as a reason for his going to Edinburgh."

The compliment which the bard paid to the minister of Loudon might have been extended to others of his reverend friends. Not only did those who loved the New Light receive him with kindness, but when his poems were published, sundry of the Old Light pastors smiled, and forgot how roughly he had handled them in his lampoons. From the letters before me, I have every reason to believe that even "Daddie Auld" felt the merits of the Poet, and grew less stern. It is a fact, that in the matter of church censure, he was at last tolerant to his tuneful parishioner. The minister of the parish is the natural judge of the merits of his flock; and when a young man manifests any powers, he looks up to his pastor as a patron. Many instances might be given; one is known to the world:—the eminent oriental scholar, Professor Murray, found his first friend in the minister of his native parish.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq..

MAUCHLINE.

(RECOMMENDING A BOY.)

Mosgaville, May 3, 1786.

I.

I hold it, Sir, my bounden duty,
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
An' wad hae don't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As, faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then, I'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

II.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
An' get sic fair example straught,
I havena ony fear.
Ye'll catechize him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' hell;
An' gar him follow to the kirk—
—Ay when ye gang yoursel.
If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin' Friday;
Then please Sir, to lea'e Sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

III.

My word of honor I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the Warld's worm;
To try to get the twa to gree,
An' name the airles* an' the fee,
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a snick can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
An' if a Devil be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him.

* The airles—earnest money.

To phrase you, an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns :
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

Verse seems to have been the natural speech of Burns; even in this hasty epistle how easily and concisely he tells all he has to say! Common country matters could not have been more clearly related, or with less waste of words in prose. This Master Tootie, Cromek informs us, lived in Mauchline and dealt in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle to disguise their age and so bring a higher price. He was an artful, contriving person: hence he is called a "nick-drawer," an epithet which the bard had already applied to a more august personage—the devil. The Poet, it would appear, had read the fine old ballad of "Leader Haughs and Yarrow," when he signed himself "Minstrel Burns."—

"But Minstrel Burns cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age,
That fleeting time procureth
For mony a place, stands in hard case,
Where blythe fowk kend nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwalt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwalt on Yarrow."

The Minstrel of the Border sings of the mutability of family greatness; while the Minstrel of Ayrshire, who seems to have cared little about old descents, speaks of the dubious morality of one neighbour, and the disregard of another for the ordinances of the Old Light:—

"Ye'll catechize him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' hell;
An' gar him follow to the kirk—
—Ay when ye gang yoursel."

TO MR. M'ADAM,

OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN.

Sir, o'er a gill I gat your card,
  I trow it made me proud;
See wha tak's notice o' the bard!
  I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
  The senseless, gawky million:
I'll cock my nose aboon them a'—
  I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursel,
  To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile ye ken fu' well,
  Is ay a blest infection.

Tho' by his* banes who in a tub
  Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,
  I independent stand ay.—

And when those legs to gude, warm kail,
  Wi' welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
  And barley-scone shall cheer me.

---

* Diogenes.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' many flow'ry simmers!
And bless your bonnie lasses baith,
I'm tald they're loosome kimmers!

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

Burns, when asked to dinner, answered in rhyme; if desired to say grace at a meal, he measured it out at once: he made returns to tax collectors in verse, and sometimes, when he wished to have a shoe put on his horse, he made the request in song. Instances will be given, in all these cases, in the course of these volumes. The present poem is a hasty, unpremeditated effusion: In the commencement of his poetic career, Burns, received an obliging letter from the laird of Craigen-Gillan, to whom his friend Woodburn was factor; and took up a sheet of paper, as he "sat owre a gill," and thanked him in verse. The Bard, amid his joy, forgets not that he is independent; and, in asserting his independence, he remembers that old age will come, and perhaps poverty—but then "a lee dyke-side and barley scone" would cheer one who had been accustomed to simple fare."

ANSWER, TO A POETICAL EPISTLE

SENT TO THE AUTHOR BY A TAILOR.

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie b—h,
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
Losh, man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bodkin's bauld,
I didna suffer ha'f sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.

What tho' at times when I grow crouse,
I gie the dames a random pouse,
Is that enough for you to souse
Your servant sae?
Gae mind your seam, ye prick the louse,
An' jag the flae.

King David o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief,
As fill'd his after life wi' grief,
An' bluidy rants,
An' yet he's ranked among the chief
O' lang-syne saunts.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes, an' druken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Clooty's haunts
An' unco slip yet,
An' snugly sit among the saunts
At Davie's hip get.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
Gae fa' upo' anither plan,
Than garrin lasses cowp the cran
Clean heels owre body,
And sairly thole their mither's ban
Afore the howdy.

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the Session sort,
Auld Clinkum at the inner port
Cried three times—"Robin!
Come hither, lad, an' answer for 't,
Ye 're blamed for jobbin'."

Wi' pinch I pat a Sunday's face on,
An' snoov'd away before the Session;
I made an open fair confession—
I scorn'd to lee;
An' syne, Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me.

A tailor in the neighbourhood of Mauchline took it upon him, it seems, to lecture Burns in verse upon his loose conversation and behaviour. The Poet answered in a strain which must have made the other, as Hamilton says,

"Strangely fidge and fike."

It is, however, too free and unceremonious towards the conclusion, and I have been compelled to omit no less than five verses, in which the Poet gives a description of his interview with the kirk-session, and relates some of the conversation that ensued.

The knight of the thimble acquits himself in verse nearly as well as other rhymers who have not the advantage of being poets. He commences by saying he hears that Burns is about to go over the sea, and that the lasses whom he loves so much are in tears; he intimates his concern for the peril of the Poet's soul, put in jeopardy, as he avers, by profane swearing, and by his attachment to the dames of Kyle :—

"Fu' weel ye ken yell gang to hell.
Gin ye persist in doing ill—
Waes me ye're hurlin' down the hill
Withouten dread,
An' ye'll get leave to swear ye're fill
After ye're dead.

"O Rab! lay by thae foolish tricks,
An' steer nae mair the foolish sex,
Or some day ye'll come through the pricks
An' that ye'll see;
Ye'll find hard living at auld Nicks—
I'm wae for thee."

Our monitor now remembers that he has himself committed, like Burns, the three-fold sin of rhyme, loose speech, and light behaviour; and passes from the singular to the plural with much complacency :—

"We're owre like those who think it fit
To stuff their noddles fu' o' wit,
An' yet content in darkness sit,
Wha shun the light,
To let them see down to the pit
That lang dark night.

"But farewell, Rab, I maun awa':
May He that made us keep us a'!
For that wad be a dreadfu' fa',
An' hurt us sair;
Lad, ye wad never mend ava,
Sae, Rab, tak' care."

No wonder that Burns said his success had produced a shoal of ill-spawned monsters in Scottish verse; the tailor was, however, one of the worst. I have heard it surmised that Burns wrote the monitory letter himself for the sake of the answer. To be able to write down to the level of the verses I have quoted—and they are the best—is a compliment to his genius, but not a just one.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.

Wae worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief;
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, through thy cursed restriction.
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil:
And for thy potence vainly wished,
To crush the villain in the dust.
For lack o' thee, I leave this much lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

R. B.

The Bank-note, on the back of which these characteristic lines were endorsed, came into the hands of James Gracie, banker in Dumfries: he knew the handwriting of the Poet, and preserved it as a curiosity. There is no day of the month or year, but it is dated from Kyle, and was probably written during the year 1786: these lines point to that period:—

"For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
For lack o' thee, I leave this much lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more."

A DREAM.

"Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason,
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason."

[On reading, in the public papers, the "Laureat's Ode," with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee, and in his dreaming fancy made the following "Address."]

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By many a lord an' lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairges,)
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G-d-sake! let nae saving-fit
Abridge your bonie barges
An' boats this day.

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.

Hail, Majesty Most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye except a compliment
A simple poet gi'es ye?
Thae bonnie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie,
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowte's been known
To mak a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug,
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley,* stem an' stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
An', large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant ay;
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want ay
On onie day.

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain Royal sailor's amour.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautet;
But ere the course o' life be thro',
It may be bitter sautet:
An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.

To "The Dream," I have heard, the neglect shown by the Government to the Poet imputed. No doubt it was otherwise than acceptable at court, and we know that Mrs. Dunlop and Mrs. Stewart of Stair, solicited, in vain, to have it omitted in the Edinburgh edition. It is likely that the suppression of the poem would have been of no benefit to the bard. The ear of his Majesty, like that of Pitt and Dundas, was not to be charmed by sweet sounds: he who mistook Pye for a poet was not likely to regard Burns as one. Nor were his ministers more merciful than their master to the tuneful and the inspired: What bard could command a dozen votes for a borough? Interest and influence were every thing, and genius was as nothing. Few of the commentators have ventured to discuss the merits of "The Dream." They are of a high order—the gaiety as well as keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not the only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic—the Poet, on reading the Laureate's Ode, fell asleep—a likely consequence, for the birth-day strains of those times were something of the dullest.

The poem seems prophetic; the young potentate of

Wales lived to rue that he had "broken Diana's pales, and rattled dice with Charlie;" nor was the Bishop of Osnaburg long in getting a wife, as well as a ribbon to his lug, but this did not hinder him from going wrong in the very way intimated by the Poet. The hymeneal charter, which he proposes to the Royal Sailor, in the affair of the "glorious galley," or the early marriage which he recommends to the "bonnie blossoms—the royal lasses dainty"—might have been beneficial to Britain. The last verse of the poem seems to intimate the coming of some great change among the nations: had the island spirit not stood firm, a scattering, such as France and other kingdoms endured, might have taken place. The poem, it must be acknowledged, is uncommonly bold and audacious.

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below,
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control,
Is wisdom's root.

"Whom did the poet intend," says Wordsworth "should be thought of as occupying that grave, over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of the 'poor inhabitant' it is supposed to be inscribed, that

'Thoughtless follies laid him low
And stained his name.'

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and the record was authentic!"

A far different opinion is given by Jeffrey, in the Edinburgh Review.—"The leading vice in Burns' character, and

the cardinal deformity of all his productions, was his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity; and his admiration of thoughtlesness, oddity, and vehement sensibility :—his belief, in short, in the dispensing power of genius and social feeling in all matters of morality and common sense. He is perpetually making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence, and talking with much complacency of the offence he has occasioned to the sober and correct part of mankind." On this topic, Wordsworth must again be heard.—"When a man, self-elected into the office of a public judge of the literature and life of his contemporaries, can have the audacity to go these lengths in framing a summary of the contents of volumes that are scattered over every quarter of the globe, and extant in almost every village in Scotland, to give the lie to his labours, we must not wonder if, in the plenitude of his concern for the interests of abstract morality, the infatuated slanderer should have found no obstacle to prevent him from insinuating that the Poet whose writings are to this degree stained and disfigured, was one of the sons of fancy and song, who spend in vain superfluities the money that belongs of right to the pale industrious tradesmen and his famishing infants, and who rave about friendship and philosophy in a tavern, while their wives' hearts are breaking at their own cheerless fire-sides, and their children pining in solitary poverty."

THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing through the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride—nae pride had he:
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Even wi' a tinkler-gypsey's messin'.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, though e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Ay gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his touzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit,
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit:
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have ;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents ;
He rises when he likes himsel ;
His flunkies answer at the bell ;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse ;
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang's my tail, whare, through the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling ;
An' though the gentry first are stechin,
Yet even the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee, blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan' ;
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own its past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't enough ;
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like ;
Himsel', a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger ;
But, how it comes, I never kenn'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented :
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit !
L—d, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle ;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear and tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side;

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak' the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts.
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
And ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont fo'k,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha' aiblins, thrang a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith, I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
An' saying aye or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To mak a tour, an' tak' a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowt;
Or down *Italian vista startles*,

Wh-re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles;
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak' himsel' look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?

Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they needna starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' ill auld age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right enough;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;

An' even their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places.
There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches ;
Ae night they're mad wi' drink and wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters ;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles, o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty ;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks ;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man an' woman ;
But this is Gentry's life in common

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night :
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone ;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan ;
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men but dogs :
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

On the 17th of February, 1786, Burns writes to John Richmond—"I have completed my poem on the Dogs, but have not shewn it to the world." It is difficult to fix dates to compositions, some of which were struck off at one heat of fancy, while others were elaborated slowly out, as time suited or inclination willed. Mr. Neil, to whose kindness I am much indebted, relates that, in a jaunt through the land of Burns, he met with Henry Cowan and Hugh his brother, who were early acquaintances of the Poet's family—members of the club, and remembered the discussion of the question regarding marriage, in which the young Poet spoke with great ardour and eloquence, and was successful. These brothers said they happened to be aiding Burns and his father with a load of wood at Coilsfield, when, in a field beside them, the Bard's collie and a collared Newfoundlander met and—

> "Scoured awa in lang excursion,
> And worried other in diversion,"

and grew very social. Burns looked on them often, and smiled and said nothing: but when the poem was published, they knew to what period his thoughts had wandered as he composed it.

In the first edition some lines of a rude stamp appear: the Bard's own good sense, or the remonstrance of the critics, induced him to amend them in the next edition. These lines—

> "Until, wi' daffin weary grown,
> Upon a knowe they sat them down;"

stood thus in the Kilmarnock edition:—

> "Till tired at last wi' mony a farce,
> They sat them down upon their a—."

And thus in the original manuscript:—

> "Till tired at last an' douce grown,
> Upon a knowe they sat them down."

Two rougher and less tasteful lines occupied the place of the following —

> "And clear the consequential sorrows
> Love gifts of Carnival Signoras."

The "Two Dogs" of Florian converse upon the affairs of the world, and satirize courts, camps and colleges — the "Twa Dogs" of Burns talk only of matters connected with their different households, nor do they say any thing which is not in character —Cæsar's hatred to the "blastit wonner," the whipper-in, is quite natural—and Luath's barking with gladness in the midst of the family joy is a fine touch of truth The aim of the Poet was to make the peasantry contented with their humble condition he discusses the great question of human enjoyment with much knowledge, and refuses to consider wealth as happiness :—

> "A country girl at her wheel,
> Her dizzens done, she's unco weel
> A country fellow at the pleugh,
> His acres tilled, he's right eneugh."

Here Burns speaks from his own experience.—"The poems of observation on life and characters," says Jeffrey, "are the 'Twa Dogs' and the various Epistles, all of which show very extraordinary sagacity and powers of expression."

END OF VOL. II

BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
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